This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

BWX
Baretti

AN

ACCOUNT

OF THE

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

OF

ITALY;

WITH

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

MISTAKES OF SOME TRAVELLERS,

WITH

REGARD TO THAT COUNTRY.

BY JOSEPH BARETTI.

VOL. I.

Il y a des Erreurs qu' il faut réfuter sérieusement; des Abſurditéo dont il faut rire; et des Fauſſetés qu' il faut repouſſer avec force. VOLTAIRE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. DAVIES, IN RUSSEL-STREET, COVENT-GARDEN; AND L. DAVIS AND C. RYMERS, IN HOLBORN.

MDCCLXVIII.

1095 '09

TO THE

EARL OF CHARLEMONT.

MY LORD,

UPON your arrival in Italy ſeveral years ago, a lucky chance brought me within the ſphere of your notice; and from that fortunate moment a friendſhip began on your Lordſhip's ſide, that has never ſuffered any abatement; and an attachment on mine, which will never ceaſe as long as I have life.

Beſides my deſire of ſhewing, by this only method in my power, my gratitude

to your Lordſhip for ſo flattering a diſtinction, I have had another motive for this dedication. In the following work I cenſure with great freedom the accounts given of Italy by ſeveral Engliſh and ſeveral foreign writers of travels. It will not readily be believed that I venture to do ſo upon trivial grounds when I addreſs myſelf to Your Lordſhip. Your knowledge of its language and manners is hardly leſs than my own, who am a native of that country; and your knowledge of its literature much more extenſive.

To you therefore, my Lord, as to a judge the beſt informed and the moſt candid, I beg leave to dedicate an eſſay intended to give your countrymen ideas of Italy ſomething more correct than thoſe which they have hitherto received from the writers on this ſubject.

Continue, my Lord, to look upon an old acquaintance with that partiality and affection,

affection, which has ſo long been my boaſt. No kindneſs of yours will ever be wilfully forfeited by,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's

moſt humble

and moſt obedient ſervant,

JOSEPH BARETTI.

PREFACE.

THE following work was not undertaken ſolely with a deſign to animadvert upon the remarks of Mr. Sharp and thoſe of other Engliſh writers, who after a ſhort tour have ventured to deſcribe Italy and the Italians. Much leſs would I paſs it upon my reader for a complete and ſatisfactory account of that celebrated country, taken in any one of thoſe many points of view, under which it may be conſidered. I hope no body will ſo much miſtake the nature of my deſign. I had long obſerved, with ſome indignation, that

that the generality of travel-writers are apt to turn the thoughts of thoſe young people who go abroad, upon frivolous and unprofitable objects, and to habituate them to premature and raſh judgments, upon every thing they ſee. I have therefore taken occaſion, eſpecially from this book of Mr. Sharp, to make them ſenſible, if I can, of the errors they are led into, and to point out to them ſome objects of inquiry more worthy of the curioſity of ſenſible perſons, and caution them againſt being too ready to condemn every thing but what they have ſeen practiſed at home. An indiſcriminate admiration of foreign manners and cuſtoms ſhows great folly; but an indiſcriminate cenſure is both fooliſh and malignant.

After having paſſed ten years in this kingdom, I returned to Italy in 1760. There I found that my brothers had collected into volumes all the letters I had wrote to them in that long ſpace of time.

A natural

A natural movement of curioſity induced me to run over thoſe volumes: but I found them (eſpecially the firſt and ſecond) ſo full of ſtrange judgments on men and things, taken from ſudden and ſuperficial impreſſions, that I thought myſelf happy in the opportunity I had of tearing to pieces each leaf as I went on in the peruſal of this ſeries of obſervations.

I beg pardon for this inſignificant anecdote that ſavours perhaps too much of egotiſm. But what has happened to me, would certainly have happened in ſimilar circumſtances to Mr. Sharp, and to almoſt all the travel-writers that ever I read. In the following pages I may be thought prejudiced in favour of my own country; and I am not ſure whether I can wholly clear myſelf of this imputation. But I hope my partiality will be thought connected with ſome knowledge and experience of the matters about which I write. Travellers, though inclined to be candid,

are

are but ſeldom well informed; and, of courſe, liable to many miſtakes. My reader will at leaſt reap this advantage from the following diſcuſſions, that he will thereby have thoſe matters more fully before him towards the direction of his own judgment.

CONTENTS.

CONTENTS

TO

VOLUME I.

CHAP. I.

ACcounts of travellers not much to be credited, and why. Mr. Sharp not fit to deſcribe the Italians, and why.

CHAP. II.

Mr. Sharp's odd method in accounting for the preſent ſtate of Ancona. Deficience in the inns of Italy how ſupplied by the hoſpitality of the natives. Manners

Manners of the Anconitans with regard to ſtrangers.

CHAP. III.

Mr. Sharp's odd method in accounting for the preſent ſtate of Sinigaglía. Entries of merchantſhips at Ancona. Remarks on the facility of plundering Loretto.

CHAP. IV.

Confutation of a ſtory told of a late Britiſh reſident in Venice. Churches in Italy conſidered as ſanctuaries for criminals.

CHAP. V.

Great variety in the ſeveral characters of the Italian nations. Meaning annexed to the word ſtranger by ſome of thoſe nations. Their kindneſs to ſtrangers. Their averſion to riots and inſurrections. Their behaviour to actors and ſingers on the ſtage. Their irafcible temper. Biſhop Burnet's account of Tuſcany oppoſed to Mr. Sharp's.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Temerity of Mr. Sharp's remarks about the married people of Italy. Some account of a clever fellow called Antonio.

CHAP. VII.

Mr. Sharp's favourable opinion of the Roman ladies. His fallacious ſlyneſs with regard to the populouſneſs and fertility of Italy.

CHAP. VIII.

Riſe, progreſs, and preſent ſtate of cicisbeiſm in Italy. Mr. de Voltaire's ridiculous remark on the Engliſh.

CHAP. IX.

Cuſtoms of the Italians in conſequence of their ſuperſtition. Harmleſſneſs of their rareeſhows. Bodily ſtrength of the Italians. Their numbers throughout the peninſula. Debates in their councils about accepting or refuſing an abolition of ſome holidays offered by the pope.

Difficulties and dangers attending innovation.

CHAP. X.

Riches got by Italian muſicians in England. Shallowneſs of Mr. Sharp's remarks on this ſubject. Voltaire's opinion of Engliſh literature, and of Shakeſpeare and Dryden's works in particular. French tranſlation of the Spectator not ſo contemptible as repreſented by Voltaire or Mr. Sharp. Voltaire's ignorance in Italian. His ridiculous encomiums on Goldoni.

CHAP. XI.

Origin, progreſs, and preſent ſtate of the Italian ſtage. Remarks on the ancient tragedies and comedies of the Italians. Their extempore plays of a very ancient date. Their paſtorals, opera's, and burletta's. Character of Metaſtaſio's drama's.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Goldoni's character, and theatrical atchievements. Abbot Chiari, and his plays. Carlo Gozzi's plays.

CHAP. XIII.

Literature. Its revival in Italy. Preſent ſtate of it there. Libraries throughout that country. Paſſeroni's and Parini's poetical works. Father Finetti's character. His knowledge of languages. Men of learning actually living in Italy not undeſerving the notice of Engliſh travellers.

CHAP. XIV.

Advantages ariſing to the Italians from literature. Phyſic, law, and divinity how practiſed in Italy. Noiſy manner of pleading peculiar to the Venetian advocates. A liſt of the men of learning that Breſcia has produced of late. Advantages of liberty and ſlavery.

CHAP. XV.

Some account of the riſe and progreſs of academies in Italy. Cruſca. Character of Arioſto. Character of Taſſo. Arcadia Romana, and its colonies. Maſtro Luca the painter, how miſtaken for St. Luke the Evangeliſt.

CHAP. XVI.

Preſent ſtate of the polite arts in Italy. Parallel between the polite artiſts of Italy and England. Buildings at Madrid and Aranjuez. Engliſh artiſts and merchants in Italy, how treated by the natives.

CHAP. XVII.

Preſent ſtate of muſic in Italy. Notions of the Italians about making it a part of female education. Manners of the Italians with regard to their numerous ſingers. Mr. Sharp's miſrepreſentations about the notions entertained by the Italians with regard to trade and laborious employments. Serenata's, and other muſical diverſions in Italy.

AN

AN ACCOUNT OF ITALY.

CHAP. I.

FEW books are ſo acceptable to the greateſt part of mankind, as thoſe that abound in ſlander and invective. Hence almoſt all accounts of travels, publiſhed within my memory, have quickly circulated, and were peruſed, at leaſt for a while, with great eagerneſs, becauſe they have been ſtrongly marked with theſe characters. Men are fond of the marvellous in manners and cuſtoms as well as in events; and a writer of travels, who would make himſelf faſhionable in his own country, is generally politic enough

to bring from abroad abundant materials for gratifying, at once, the malignity and the love of novelty, that muſt predominate in ſo many of his readers; and he who is ſo little converſant in the affairs of his own country, as not to have any of his ſpeculations upon domeſtic affairs produced without ridicule, may with ſafety, and ſometimes with reputation, be very wiſe in thoſe of other countries.

An author of this caſt, after a ſlight ſurvey of the provinces, through which he has had occaſion to take a ſhort ramble, returns home; and ſnatching up his pen in the rage of reformation, fills pages and pages with ſcurrilous narratives of pretended abſurdities, intermixed with the moſt ſhocking tales of fancied crimes; very gravely inſiſting, that thoſe crimes and abſurdities were not ſingle actions of this and that individual, but general pictures of nature in the countries through which he has travelled. Every unexperienced reader will infallibly be pleaſed with an opportunity of laughing at the prodigious

prodigious folly of him who lives on the other ſide of the ſea, and will always be glad to find that he may bleſs himſelf for not having been born in the wicked country beyond the mountain. Thus falſhood is palmed for truth upon the credulous, and thus are men confirmed in a narrow way of thinking, and in thoſe local prejudices, of which it ought to be the great end of travelling, and books of travels, to cure them.

An itinerary lately publiſhed by Mr. Samuel Sharp on the cuſtoms and manners of Italy, ſeems to me above all others a book of this kind. Whether it is to be conſidered as a candid and inſtructive account of a foreign country, or as the offspring of an ignorant, careleſs, and prejudiced writer, will be occaſionally examined in the following ſheets: and ſhould I prove earneſt in the defence of my country, of which he has given ſo very extraordinary an account, I hope I ſhall be excuſed by the generous ſym-

pathy of all Engliſhmen, who are ſo laudably partial to their own.

But before I enter into the examen of Mr. Sharp's book, it may not be amiſs to prove, that he was totally unfit for the taſk he has voluntarily undertaken; the difficult taſk of delineating the nation that inhabits the peninſula in which I was born, as he laid under three moſt capital diſadvantages when he entered it; that is to ſay, he was ignorant of the Italian language; was of no high rank; and was afflicted with bodily diſorders.

That Mr. Sharp was ignorant of the Italian language, may be eaſily proved by only obſerving, that throughout his work he has ſpelt ſeveral names of families, of ſaints, and of towns erroneouſly. His inability in catching ſounds when orally uttered, appears moſt glaringly in his miſerable remarks on the Venetian dialect; a dialect very harſh and diſpleaſing to his ears, and yet extremely ſmooth in itſelf, as it abounds in vowels even more than the Tuſcan, which renders it

delightful

delightful to the ears of all the Italians. Comparing this dialect with the Tuſcan, Mr. Sharp affirms, that the Venetians have the words *Dudice*, *Dulio*, *Diovenne*, *Maniare*, and *Raione*; but theſe words, which he writes down all in a ſtring, he has whimſically coined himſelf, and not one of the five belongs to the Venetian dialect, or to any other dialect of Italy. Let any of my readers aſk a Venetian, or any other Italian now in England, and I will venture to be called a calumniator, if any Italian whatſoever knows any of theſe five words, either by Mr. Sharp's ſpelling, or by any pronunciation that he may invent for them.

Intending to throw a ridicule on the Italians, Mr. Sharp ſays, that *they give the name of palaces even to their country houſes*. But he is himſelf ridiculous in ſaying ſo. *Un palazzo* means in Italian *the building where the ſovereign reſides, or the houſe in which a nobleman lives*. Thus Marlborough-houſe or Devonſhire-houſe would, in Italian, be diſtinguiſhed from

common houſes, and be called *palazzo's*. What in England is *a private man's habitation*, or *a building in which many common families live*, in Italian is called *una caſa*. The leaſt knowledge of our language had ſhown Mr. Sharp the diſtinguiſhing propriety of theſe two words, and had kept him from ſtealing this blunder, along with many others, from Miſſon's travels through Italy. Miſſon was not able to ſeparate the idea annexed by the Engliſh to their word *palace*, from that annexed by the Italians to their word *palazzo*. He thought they both excluded *littleneſs*, which our word *palazzo* does not, and betrayed his unſkilfulneſs in our language many years ago, as Mr. Sharp does now.

Mr. Sharp is likewiſe wrong in his aſſertion, that *what in England is called a little craſh of muſic, compoſed of two or three inſtruments, is, in Italian, called* ACCADEMIA; and, that *a trifling halfpenny errand is called* AMBASCIATA. He has probably overheard ſome footman make uſe of theſe two words in theſe impro-

per

per ſenſes, and acquainted his nation with the ſtrange uſe that the pompous Italians make of their words: but footmen will often ſpeak as improperly in Italy as any where elſe; and inſtead of conſulting ſuch people about the meaning of words, he ought to have looked into a dictionary.

I could ſay much more to prove by his book, that Mr. Sharp underſtands near as much Italian as many French barbers underſtand Engliſh after a month's reſidence in London. I could eaſily point out the meagerneſs of his remarks on the gutturality of the Florentine and the Sieneſe, and laugh at his acuteneſs in having diſcovered that they pronounce *ce* and *ci* as the Engliſh do *che* and *chi*. I could ſet in a ſtrong light the impertinence of his deciſion as to the place where the beſt Italian is to be learned. But how is it poſſible for me to deſcend ſo very low, as to animadvert on the Italian language with this rare linguiſt, who talks through one fourth of his book of *Ciciſbeo's*, and

never once ſpells the word right, writing for ever *Ciceſbeo's* or *Ceceſbeo's?*

If his utter ignorance of the Italian language ought to have awed him into ſilence about the cuſtoms and manners of Italy, the mediocrity of his rank in life could certainly not contribute much towards qualifying him for ſuch an undertaking.

I will not ſay by this, that it is an abſolute requiſite towards painting nations, to be a man of high rank; and I am far from intending the leaſt diſparagement to him, when I ſay that he is not a man of high rank. I reſpect his profeſſion; and if he had given me leave, I would reſpect himſelf. I mean only to ſay, that his deſcriptions of the manners of the Italian nobility, which fill up a conſiderable part of his work, are little to be credited, becauſe his rank in life, which in other reſpects was no diſparagement and could be of no prejudice to him, kept the Engliſh miniſters, as well as the noble Engliſh travellers in Italy, from intro-

ducing him to the Italian nobles, and conſequently from affording him an opportunity of being properly acquainted with their true character.

I muſt even go a ſtep further, and affirm, that in Venice Mr. Sharp never entered any nobleman's houſe as a viſitor, though he talks ſo much and ſo wiſely about them and their domeſtic manners. I take it for granted, that Mr. Sharp is incapable of telling a deliberate untruth when called upon: therefore I am ſure this my aſſertion will paſs without the leaſt contradiction on his ſide; and I am likewiſe ſure, in ſpight of his many letters from Rome and from Naples, in which he ſpeaks ſo diffuſely about the manners of the Roman and Neapolitan nobility, that he will never venture to ſay he ever entered as a viſitor any Neapolitan or Roman houſe, except that of the marchioneſs Ceva at Rome, who, upon the ſimple recommendation of her hair-dreſſer, treated him with much kindneſs, and procured

cured him the means of ſeeing conveniently the ceremonies of the holy week.

But if Mr. Sharp went to Italy without any thing in his rank which could obtain him admittance into any nobleman's houſe, why did he not, at leaſt, ſpeak with ſome diffidence in their diſparagement, and why did he advance with ſuch an eaſy confidence, many things to which he neither was, nor could, be an eye-witneſs? How could he be ſo deciſive in his calumnies on their domeſtic conduct, and paint them all as the moſt vicious ſet of wretches that ever exiſted? Ought he not at leaſt to have informed his readers, that whatever he related of them was a mere hearſay? Would an Italian ſurgeon, perfectly ignorant of the Engliſh language, be intitled to any credit, if, after a few months reſidence in England, he took into his head to give, in a printed book, the character of the Engliſh nobility, or even of the Engliſh coblers? I, who have reſided many years in England; who have viſited the greateſt

part

part of its provinces; who am tolerably ſkilled in its language, and have kept a great variety of Engliſh company, would find myſelf much embarraſſed, was I to give an account of the manners of any claſs of people in this kingdom. I know that ſuch a taſk is very difficult to a foreigner; and that, even after a long ſtudy of any people, we are liable to miſtakes. I ſhould, therefore, feel the greateſt diffidence, and think myſelf obliged to ſpeak with the greateſt caution, if ever I could prevail upon myſelf to make ſuch an attempt, eſpecially where I found myſelf diſpoſed to condemn any general or reigning cuſtom, to cenſure a whole ſex, a whole profeſſion, or any intire body of people.

Mr. Sharp obſerved, that the Italian nobles do not eaſily admit to their familiarity thoſe foreigners who are not decorated by ſome great name or title; and becauſe he was not treated with the regard that his perſonal merit claims from the nobility of his own country, he gave vent

vent to the moſt unwarrantable ſpleen, and ſpoke of them all in the moſt poiſoned terms that he could poſſibly find in his language. But was it their fault, if they were not appriſed of his great perſonal merit? Was it their fault if he was not introduced to any of them?

As to his third diſqualification, it is not difficult to comprehend, that a man in a bad ſtate of health is very unfit to make obſervations on nations, and deſcribe their manners from his own knowledge.

Mr. Sharp went to Italy with a painful aſthma that often threatened his life, and once forced him to keep his bed for near two months at Naples: therefore, when ever he reached any town, he ſtayed at home, and ſcarcely ever converſed with any native or ſtranger. I am poſitive he will not deny, that, in Venice eſpecially, he ſeldom viſited the Engliſh reſident there, though he makes ſo free with his name, as to relate a ſtory of him, which I apprehend cannot be true, as I ſhall prove

in due time. But the man who will play the cenſor upon nations, muſt give me leave to tell him, that he has need of ſome other qualifications beſides that of a troubleſome malady. Together with a good ſhare of underſtanding, this hard taſk requires ſome perſonal activity, to be able to introduce one's ſelf every where with eaſe and propriety, and take every where a cloſe view of the privacies of the high, the middling, and the low. A diſeaſed body ſeldom cloathes a chearful mind; and the man not enlivened by chearfulneſs will ſeldom get admittance to thoſe privacies; or, if admitted, will ſeldom ſee objects as they are. His ſadneſs will diffuſe itſelf over every thing he looks on, and all objects will be miſrepreſented by moroſeneſs and ill-nature, the ordinary concomitants of bad health. Hence Mr. Sharp's aſperity and rancour whenever he ſpeaks of what he ſaw or heard in Italy, where he could not poſſibly find any honeſt or knowing man but himſelf, nor any modeſt and elegant lady, but thoſe really

deſerving

deſerving ones that he took with him from home.

We are therefore not to wonder if a man thus ignorant of the language, of a rank not impoſing with regard to the Italians, and afflicted with a dangerous diſorder, has not been able to tell many truths, and has caricatured many facts: but we have real reaſon for ſurpriſe, to ſee him, under theſe diſadvantages, ſetting confidently about ſuch a work as that of deſcribing a large nation, or rather a cluſter of little nations, which differ among themſelves not only in manners and in cuſtoms, but in government and in laws, and even in dreſs and in language. We have reaſon for ſurpriſe to hear him talk with the greateſt aſſurance about a country, which he only viſited in a curſory manner, ſtopping only a few days, and often only a few hours, in the greateſt part of its cities. Had he confined himſelf to the bare deſcription of viſible objects, or dealt only in repreſentations of inn-keepers, poſtillions, valets-de-

de-place, and other ſuch people, his work might perhaps have had ſome veracity and ſome uſe. But he was for ſoaring higher, and would paint the Italians of every rank. A daring genius indeed! Yet let me give in the next chapter a ſmall ſpecimen of his ſtrange method of furniſhing himſelf with the neceſſary materials for his travelling letters, and let me tell a ſhort tale of him, the genuineneſs of which he will certainly not venture to deny.

CHAP. II.

ONE Signor Giuſeppe Baretti (myſelf I mean) went from Venice to Ancona in the year 1765.

I had been there about three months without ever having had the pleaſure of ſeeing an Engliſh traveller go through or by the place; when lo! on a morning betimes, one Signor Cecco Storani came

to

to me in a hurry, and told me, that late the preceding night an Engliſh gentleman with three young ladies had put up at the Poſt-houſe; and as he did not underſtand Engliſh, he deſired I would introduce him to theſe ſtrangers, that he and his family might ſhow them ſome civilities.

This Signor Cecco is the ſon of an Anconitan nobleman, decorated by the pope or the pretender (no matter which) with the title of Engliſh conſul in that town. The Britiſh conſulſhip there is certainly not very profitable in point of intereſt: but the nobility of Ancona look upon it as very honourable, and they are fond of it, as it gives them ſome conſideration in the place, beſides affording them an opportunity of being liberal of their dinners to many ſtrangers, and eſpecially the Engliſh, of whom they are enamoured to a degree of enthuſiaſm.

If Mr. Sharp knew me perſonally, he would certainly do me the honour to believe me, when I aver that I was much

pleaſed

pleaſed with this piece of intelligence from Signor Cecco. Now, ſaid I, I ſhall ſee an Engliſhman again; and what is ſtill infinitely better, ſome Engliſh women, whoſe converſation will renew thoſe pleaſing ideas, of which I have been ſo long deprived. But alas, what a diſappointment! Though it was ſcarcely eight o'clock, as far as I can remember, on my reaching the inn with my friend, I found that the gentleman and the ladies were gone. They had got an hour before into their coach, and were haſting towards Loretto, in their way to Rome.

No man in his ſenſes can ſuppoſe that a gentleman who travels with ſuch precipitancy along the Romagna and the Marca, is a fit perſon to meddle with the buſineſs of deſcribing the manners and cuſtoms of their inhabitants. Yet Mr. Sharp has boldly meddled with that buſineſs, for the gentleman who travelled with thoſe young ladies, was Mr. Sharp himſelf.

On his arrival at Loretto the ſame evening of that day in which he left Ancona, Mr. Sharp ſat gravely down to write a long letter to an imaginary correſpondent in England, and informed him of *the diſadvantages that Ancona lies under, from the infinite conceſſions made to the church by the commercial and military parts of the nation.* A fine period, and in the true political ſtyle! But did Mr. Sharp underſtand it himſelf when he had written it? For my part I do not, as I never heard at Ancona of any *commercial* or *military parts of the Anconitan nation.* The church at Ancona is the abſolute temporal ſovereign as well as the ſpiritual: and what *conceſſions* do abſolute ſovereigns want from any part of their ſubjects? It is true, that there are at Ancona many *commercial people*; that is, ſome dozen of merchants: and it is true there are ſome *military people*; that is, about two ſcore of ſoldiers: but neither of theſe two *parts* of that *nation* do, or can, conſtitute any diſtinct political body endowed with any

any power independant of the ſovereign, as the drift of Mr. Sharp's emphatical period imports, when he ſays, that *they made conceſſions*. Yet theſe conceſſions are *infinite* by his account.

After this woeful affair of the infinite conceſſions, Mr. Sharp adds, that Ancona has *a fine citadel and a mole*. Yet, whatever beauty he may have diſcovered in a citadel which he did not viſit, and of which he only ſaw ſome outward part, as he was coming along ſhore from Fiumicino, I will make bold to tell this ſkilful engineer, that the citadel of Ancona is not very fine, if the beauty of a citadel conſiſts in the ſtrength of its walls and the regularity of its parts. Then his ſkimming lightly on Ancona's mole, and coupling it with the citadel, make me ſuppoſe, that he heard ſomebody at the inn mention ſuch a thing as a mole; and ſo he ſet the word down in his memorandum-book, that he might not forget to clap it in the letter which he was to write about Ancona that ſame evening,

of next day, at Loretto. But by way of commentary to his text, I will ſay that Ancona's mole is one of the grandeſt works now carried on in Europe. It is a wall, if I may ſo call it, built in the ſea, in order to check the impetuoſity of the waves, which render that port very unſafe whenever the wind blows from the oppoſite coaſt of the Adriatic. As that wind blows very frequently in ſummer, and almoſt perpetually in winter, the late Pope began this work, after having declared Ancona a free port. They began upon the ſmall remains of an ancient Roman mole. The preſent work is to be about two thouſand feet in length, if not more; and when Mr. Sharp paſſed that way, there was already twelve hundred feet of it finiſhed. Its breadth is one hundred feet, and its depth ſixty-eight from the water's edge. Many ſhips loaded with that kind of ſand called *Pozzolana*, go to Ancona every year from the neighbourhood of Rome, where it is found, and no other ſand is admitted in the

the work, as no other will petrify ſo well under water when mixed with lime. The ſtone at firſt came alſo by ſea from that part of Iſtria which belongs to the Venetians: but the Venetians, not being willing to permit large exportations of that material for the carrying on a work which was to be detrimental to them in a commercial view, made the Roman government think of other means to provide ſtone for continuing the mole. A Roman architect, called Marchionne, who has the direction of the work, ſearched carefully the hills about Ancona, and diſcovered a quarry of very hard ſtone, not unlike marble; and by means of his diſcovery the Anconitans were luckily freed from the neceſſity of providing themſelves with that material from Iſtria. According to the plan of the architect Vanvitelli, purſued by his able ſucceſſor Marchionne, this mole is to be very broad at the end, and to have a fortreſs on it, with a lighthouſe. It is adorned with two triumphal arches, one ancient, the other modern.

thoſe on the Loretto road, and indicating a poverty full as blamable in the perſons who ſuffer it, and the police which permits it. Had Mr. Sharp tarried only a ſingle day at Ancona, Signor Cecco Storani and I would have had the pleaſure of ſhowing him the town: and whatever *extreme wretchedneſs* he may dream of in his gloomy hours, I muſt tell him that he would not have been much troubled by extremely wretched beggars in the town, as I ſcarce ſaw one during the ſix months I lived there, though there are ſome in the adjacent country. He would there have ſeen ſome very good and ſightly houſes, the inhabitants of which would have treated him and his fair fellow-travellers, not with a Milaneſe or a Neapolitan profuſion, but with elegance, with reſpect, and with kindneſs. He would then have, by the Anconitan gentlemen and ladies, been offered ſome letters to their friends along that unfrequented road to Rome, who would have occaſionally accommodated him better than he was at

the

the inns, where his *Vetturino* thought proper to carry him; to which inns few Italians of any note reſort, going either to their friends, if they have any, or to convents, where hoſpitality is ſeldom denied, as at their departure it is cuſtomary to leave a little money for the celebration of two or three maſſes, by way of compenſation for the trouble given to their entertainers. Theſe are the great hardſhips that Mr. Sharp would have been forced to undergo, if he had ſtopped a little while at Ancona. At the very worſt, I myſelf, as a kind of demi-Engliſhman, would have adviſed him to furniſh himſelf with ſheets, that he might not lie on that road in beggarly pilgrim-ſheets, and often in no ſheets at all. But he is very wrong when he laments ſo woefully his hard fate, that led him through theſe two provinces. This wide world cannot all be alike, and its roads cannot all be ſo pleaſant and ſo convenient for travelling as thoſe of Berkſhire and Lombardy. If he found the

road

road through the Romagna and the Marca quite uncomfortable in point of accomodation, he muſt partly thank himſelf for it, as he choſe to go but ſlowly through that, and every part of Italy. Inſtead of riding it out bravely, and, like a true monied man, with poſt-horſes, which are to be had every where, he hired a voiturin, and agreed that he ſhould carry him, for a certain ſum, ſcot-free as far as Rome, with four jaded beaſts that belonged to the fellow. But how could Mr. Sharp be ſo ſimple as to ſtrike ſuch a bargain, and ſubmit voluntarily to go near three hundred miles through ſuch a ſandy, rocky, and hilly country with the ſame cattle? Did he not conceive that by ſuch a bargain he made it the intereſt of that fellow to take him to the cheapeſt inns, which is as much as to ſay the moſt beggarly, that the feeding of his fare might coſt him little? He declaims moſt tragically againſt *Italian beds, Italian cooks, Italian poſt-horſes, Italian poſtillions, and Italian naſtineſs.* He aſſures his correſpondent,

ſpondent, that *he may give what ſcope he pleaſes to his fancy, but ſhall never imagine half the diſagreeableneſs of them.* I will readily admit all this: yet a little obvious good management, and a little extraordinary expence, will make that road, in all parts, tolerable, and, in many, comfortable; becauſe there are many good towns along it, which by driving poſt may eaſily be reached one after another every night. What ſignifies his complaining that the fowls dreſſed for him on the road were bad eating, becauſe killed on his alighting, and immediately boiled and roaſted? The inn-keepers in that part of the world are not poſſeſſed of the art of divination, and he gave them no intimation beforehand of his coming. Would he have them kill part of their poultry every day in the year, when they ſcarcely ſee a traveller in a month? This heavy misfortune of not meeting fowl ready killed may happen to him even in England, if he travels at any conſiderable diſtance from London, and out of the moſt

moſt frequented roads. But if the weakneſs of his conſtitution, or the delicacy of his taſte was ſuch, he might have lighted upon the obvious expedient of taking half a dozen fowls, ready killed, every day, in his coach, and exchanging them from inn to inn, boiling and roaſting thoſe to-day, that had been killed the day before.

I do not inſiſt on theſe points as very material. The deſcription of inns and ſuppers was what laid moſt within Mr. Sharp's powers of obſervation. Neither do I pretend to ſay, that it was very neceſſary for him to give an accurate account of Ancona. But when he did ſpeak of that place, it was proper that he ſhould know ſomething of it. But he ſaw little, inquired leſs, and reflected not at all; blindly following his travelling predeceſſors in their invectives againſt the pope's government. Having lived but ſix months under that government, though I have not altogether wanted the deſire and means of information, I cannot pretend to ſay how far many of thoſe invectives

are

are founded: but this much truth obliges me to ſay, that, as far as I could obſerve, during my reſidence in Ancona, there has been as much done (and even more) to promote the trade and proſperity of that city, as was ever done for any other place I have viſited in my various journies through ſeveral parts of Europe. That government made it a free port, by which they gave up ſome revenue: they were at the expence of a new Lazzaretto, the moſt magnificent building of the kind in Europe; and they have been many years carrying on that expenſive work of the mole, to which the revenues of the whole province are appropriated. Theſe are facts; and Mr. Sharp's obſervations are nothing but looſe talk and common-place declamation.

Let me now for a moment return to the inns in ſeveral parts of Italy, and ſay, that what is deficient in them, is, to my knowledge, in ſome places ſupplied by the natural hoſpitality of the people. I muſt here mention a particular that happened

pened to myſelf. On my firſt arrival at Ancona I was not a little ſurprized to receive ſome preſents of fiſh, game, oranges, and fruits from ſeveral of its *wretched inhabitants*, that is, from ſome of their beſt people. They ſent me panniers and baſkets full of them, with meſſages that expreſſed their deſire of becoming acquainted with me, as they underſtood that I intended to ſtay a while amongſt them. This I thought a pretty piece of urbanity; and this is what many people of Ancona do to every ſtranger who ſtops any time there. I wiſh that their encreaſing trade may not abate the gentleneſs of their manners, and the warmth of their hoſpitality.

CHAP. III.

MR. Sharp came from Sinigaglia to Ancona in a day; and, though he ſtayed but one night in each of theſe two places, yet he decides with his uſual peremptorineſs,

neſs, that *Sinigaglia is the only riſing town in Italy, and that the occaſion of its flouriſhing condition is the vogue of a fair once a year, which is annually improving.* But this peremptory deciſion is made at random. As he was going to alight at the inn there, he could not help ſeeing many houſes, and even whole ſtreets, built anew; and his wonderous ſagacity led him immediately to conclude, that Sinigaglia was *a riſing town*; which I grant: but not for the reaſon he aſſigns, as the fair he mentions, inſtead of *annually improving*, is *annually decaying*. Sinigaglia owes its riſing to its own ſmall port, which having been made better within theſe few years, enables its inhabitants to carry on a little trade the whole year round. Beſides, their being ſo near the much-improved port of Ancona is likewiſe of ſome advantage to them, as they can ſend thither their wheat, turkey-corn, hemp, and ſilk, of which their territory produces much, and ſhip theſe and other commodities for diſtant markets. But it is not true, that

Sinigaglia

Sinigaglia *is the only riſing town in Italy*; and it may eaſily be proved that this peremptory aſſertion is quite impertinent, as there are many other towns in Italy that have riſen within theſe few years, and riſe actually much faſter in proportion than Sinigaglia. Amongſt theſe, I will only name Turin, Florence, Leghorn and Naples. Turin is become a full fourth more populous, ſince the addition of ſome provinces, made a few years ago, to the king of Sardinia's dominions. Florence and Leghorn encreaſe both in buildings and inhabitants ſince their ſovereign reſides no more at Vienna; and Naples begins to be too monſtrous a capital for that kingdom, ſince it is no more governed by viceroys. If Mr. Sharp had taken the leaſt inſpection of Ancona, he would have been convinced that it riſes likewiſe much faſter than Sinigaglia. I have had an opportunity of examining the entries of the ſhips at their cuſtom-houſe, and have found, that about twenty years ago the Anconitans could ſcarcely ſee twenty

merchant-

merchant-ſhips in their port: but ſince their mole is far advanced, they ſee more than ſix times that number. Their encreaſe of commerce has already enriched many of their families, and, among others, that of the marquis Trionfi, (or Francis Trionfi, as his correſpondents call him) who by a trade ſkilfully managed, has acquired in a little time ſuch a fortune, as would enable him to make a figure even on the Change of London. If at Sinigaglia they have built much of late, they have built much more at Ancona, where the noblemen do not ſcruple to become merchants. The marquis Trionfi alone has built himſelf ſuch a dwelling-houſe in Ancona, and ſo many houſes beſides in various parts of the territory, that the whole together would almoſt form a Sinigaglia. Of theſe two towns Mr. Sharp took but a haſty view, as he was going along in his coach, and then ſaid raſhly what came uppermoſt. He talked of the *riſing* of the one, and of the *extreme wretchedneſs* of the other, without

knowing a jot of either, having reached them both late at night, and quitted them early in the morning.

However though Mr. Sharp is ſometimes miſtaken in his object, I will do him the juſtice of ſaying, that upon the whole he appears to be a good-natured man; and of a country too, where *good-nature* is ſo utterly engroſſed, that many Engliſhmen think it even impoſſible to find an equivalent for the word itſelf in any other language. Mr. Sharp's immenſe tenderneſs ſhows itſelf upon almoſt every occaſion. He is drooping with ſadneſs when he croſſes any deſart ſpot, and revolves in his mind, that formerly that ſelf ſame ſpot was famous for its fertility and populouſneſs. He feels great compaſſion in ſurveying the bellies of the fat prieſts, and the thin guts of the people; and is ready to weep at both from oppoſite motives: he drops a tear when he conſiders how ignorant, helpleſs, and wretched the Italians are; and gives vent to many deep ſighs as he is reverendly kneeling on great

Galileo's

Galileo's tomb, who underwent the rack in the inquiſition, for having ſupported a doctrine which is now univerſally held in Rome herſelf. There is no end of Mr. Sharp's lamentations and parade of good-nature. But where was his good-nature when he betrayed ſomewhat like a wiſh, in favour of the Barbary pirates, and even gave them a broad hint about the facility of plundering the treaſures at Loretto? Had he forgot that thoſe pirates are a gang of Mahometans and Jews, of the very worſt kind, to ſay nothing of Renegado's? It is true, that the Loretto-people are Chriſtians of the very worſt kind, in Mr. Sharp's opinion: yet one would think, that a good-natured man, and one of the beſt kind of Chriſtians, could never be pleaſed to hear of any goods, whether wiſely or ſuperſtitiouſly employed, belonging to Chriſtians of any denomination, carried away to Algiers or Tripoli, to promote the happineſs of infidelity and the triumph of unbelievers. But good-natured Chriſtians, whether papiſts or

proteſtants, when influenced by a religious zeal, are often keener in their averſion and hatred than they are themſelves aware of: and ſo the good-natured Mr. Sharp has unwarily ſhown, that he would not be ſorry if thoſe pirates could run away with the Loretto-treaſure, and the miraculous Madona into the bargain. Nor did he conſider, that if his hints were taken, the Loretto gold and jewels might enable thoſe plunderers to break the peace with Old England, and put her at the expence of ſtill larger preſents to keep them quiet.

Any other Chriſtian, leſs ſtimulated by good-nature than Mr. Sharp, would have acted quite differently in his caſe; and after having taken, from within his coach, ſo exact a ſurvey of the Adriatic as Mr. Sharp did, he would, on his arrival at Rome, have gone ſtraight to the Pope, and, without mincing the matter, would have told his holineſs of the great eaſe with which the Barbary-pirates could land in that part of his holineſs's dominions,

nions, and ſweep away, at once, all the Loretto gold and jewels; pointing out, at the ſame time, the means of ſcreening his rich Madona againſt all attempts of the Africans, and adviſing the poor old man to remove the Adriatic further off, rather than venture to give them ſuch a triumph over his faithful ſubjects.

Whatever the ſagacity of Mr. Sharp may be on this point, he was not, however, the firſt who took notice of the great facility with which Loretto might be plundered. Many proteſtant travellers, full as good-natured and ſagacious as him, have ſpoke of it long before he viſited Italy; and the great Addiſon himſelf would have the honour of being one of them.

Addiſon ſays, that ſuch an enterpriſe *might prove difficult to the Turks, becauſe the Venetians keep too watchful an eye over their motions; but would be an eaſy thing for a Chriſtian prince, who had ſhips paſſing too and fro, without ſuſpicion, eſpecially*

if he had a party in the town diſguiſed like pilgrims.

Such are the wiſe obſervations the greateſt wits are apt to make on their travels, when they inſpect countries from their poſt-chaiſes, and are otherwiſe prejudiced againſt the places they viſit.

But if Addiſon had examined Loretto and the adjacent parts ever ſo ſuperficially, he would not have expoſed himſelf to the ridicule of thoſe Roman catholics who know ſomething of the matter.

Loretto is a ſmall town, tolerably fortified, that lies on an eminence, near three miles from the ſea. The ſeveral paths from Loretto to the ſea-ſide, far from being flat and ſmooth, are all ſo winding and craggy, that a man needs look how he walks, if he has no mind to diſlocate his collar-bone. Between the town and the ſea, all along the coaſt, there are many country-houſes, and many cottages of peaſants and fiſhermen; and within an hour's walk of Loretto, on three different

ſides,

ſides, there are three towns; that is, Recanati, Oſimo, and Camerano, beſides many villages and hamlets. Then the ſea-coaſt oppoſite Loretto is very high, and almoſt perpendicular, and the ſea under it is ſo full of ſhallows and rocks, as not to be approached by any large ſhip without the greateſt danger.

Let us now ſuppoſe, that an honeſt Chriſtian prince, at peace with the Pope, and therefore, as Mr. Addiſon expreſſes it, *under no ſuſpicion*, forms the holy ſcheme of robbing the Pope at Loretto. A ſhip is made ready in ſome diſtant port, and manned with a numerous, brave and faithful Chriſtian crew. The Argoſy ſails away, and in ſo ſecret a manner, that no ſoul is appriſed of its deſtination but its captain.

This captain ſteers towards Loretto, and ſkilfully pitches upon a dark night to anchor oppoſite the town, that he may not be diſcovered by the ſeveral guards that watch the coaſt, or ſeen by the numerous fiſhing-boats that ſwarm there

every night when the waters are quiet. He then appriſes his crew of the ſcheme; the boats are made ready; three or four hundred brave fellows get into them; row to ſhore, and land in the greateſt ſafety. There they clamber up the hanging cliffs in a moment; march to Loretto ſo cloſely and ſo ſilently, that they are neither heard nor ſeen; and reach the town without having awaked any body from his ſleep. They ſee one of the gates; and it is plain they want to get in; but how is this to be effected?

I will give it for granted, that the difficult part of this piece of work begins but there. There the merry men attempt to let the draw-bridge down, and force open the gate; and are ſaluted by a centinel with a ſingle muſket-ſhot.

The alarm has not been raiſed before: but now the bells are rung; the inhabitants both in and out of the town get out of their beds, and a garriſon of fifty or ſixty ſoldiers (I will not ſay of more than a hundred) run to their arms. Yet,

the

the merry men throw the draw-bridge down, force the gate open; enter the town; kill the garriſon with the inhabitants; and leave neither woman nor child alive, that they may not fling a ſingle ſtone from window or roof: then they advance to the church. Its gates, or part of its wall, is broke open in an inſtant: ſo is the iron-gate of the ſanctuary, where the riches are depoſited.

Each of the brave fellows is now loaded with a lamp of gold, a ſtatue of ſilver, or a bag of jewels; and now 'tis time to retire: therefore they go back the way they came, and fight, thus loaded, ſeveral thouſands of the country-militia, as well as all the inhabitants of Recanati, Oſimo, Camerano, and other places, who, encouraged by their prieſts and friars, are run to defend their beloved Madona. Poor people! they are all preſently killed by the merry men; who get then ſafe on the ridge of the high coaſt; leap down to the water with their ſtatues, lamps, and

bags

bags on their backs; and look for their many boats waiting below.

All this, Mr. Reader, may be done with the greateſt eaſe, I own. I am only afraid that thoſe boats will not be quite ready to receive the crew, now quite triumphant. The infernal uproar which has been raiſed two or three hours before on all ſides of the coaſt, has brought there a great number of fiſhing-barks, and other veſſels; and the people in them, being well acquainted with their own ſhallows and rocks, have ventured through the bullets fired from the ſhip, lying at anchor at a good diſtance; have killed or taken the few that guarded thoſe boats; and, animated by the utmoſt rage of ſuperſtition, ſtand now prepared to fight the merry men who ſhould attempt to ſwim over to their ſhip.

Such would, in all probability, be the ſucceſs of an expedition againſt Loretto, if attempted with a ſingle ſhip, and in a ſmuggling manner. As to the Addiſonian Scheme,

ſcheme, of letting ſome hundred pilgrims into the ſecret, and keep them ready to open the gates to the aſſailants on the firſt ſignal, that is a very poor ſcheme, as it would encreaſe, rather than diminiſh, the difficulty of the enterpriſe. No number of pilgrims are admitted together in Loretto, but on two or three great feſtival days, throughout the year; and on thoſe days there are generally ſome thouſands, whoſe throats muſt all be cut by the few treacherous hundred, before any thing elſe is done.

However, inſtead of a ſingle ſhip, we will find a good Chriſtian prince who will ſend ten, or twenty, or even a hundred. Hay-day! But if Mr. Sharp, in ſupport of his and Mr. Addiſon's opinion, does not go to convince ſome Chriſtian prince, that a whole fleet may enter the Adriatic inviſible, I muſt ſtill continue to laugh at their ſchemes, and think that Loretto is not eaſily to be plundered but by the diſordered imagination of a good-natured proteſtant traveller.

But

But it is time to have done with this ridiculous ſubject, and haſten to the end of my chapter. I have dwelt ſo long upon it only to ſhow into what blunders travellers, even of abilities, will be betrayed, when they attempt to write of things, of which they have no knowledge. And yet, they will ſo attempt to write, and even to lay plans of attacks and conqueſts, when they have not even the ſlighteſt acquaintance with the face of the country upon which they employ their imaginations.

But is it not ſomewhat melancholy, that Mr. Addiſon himſelf, who was otherwiſe a man of humanity, ſhould be ſo far carried away by his religious prejudices, as to take a ſeeming delight in a ſcheme of downright robbery, and ſhould talk of ſuch a ſcheme, even for a Chriſtian prince, without ſhowing the leaſt ſenſe of the injuſtice of it? That he ſhould almoſt propoſe it without the leaſt ſign of diſapprobation? and that Mr. Sharp, another man of humanity, ſhould be ſo tickled with

with it, as to make it a ſubject of particular merriment, when they both muſt have known that ſuch a ſcheme could not poſſibly be executed without treachery, robbery, and innumerable murders? The ſuperſtition of the Italians gives others no right to invade their country, ſeize their goods, or deſtroy their perſons; and I can never believe that this pious project was ever one of the particulars that has recommended the books of travels either of Mr. Addiſon or Mr. Sharp to the virtuous and generous Engliſh nation.

CHAP. IV.

I Said above that Mr. Sharp made too free with the name of the Engliſh reſident at Venice, by telling a ſtory of him, which, becauſe it is not to his honour, I cannot poſſibly believe to be true.

After having endeavoured to perſuade his readers that the Venetian populace, like

like all other in Italy, are a ſet of abominable Villains, who *will treacherouſly ſtab on the leaſt provocation*; and that the frequency of aſſaſſination is to be attributed to the great facility which delinquents have in finding ſanctuaries, as *every church and holy place there is a ſanctuary, and becauſe of the great remiſſneſs, both of law and proſecution*, Mr. Sharp continues thus:

Our late reſident in Venice, upon his firſt arrival there, loudly protlaimed, that ſhould any Engliſhman be aſſaſſinated during his reſidentſhip, no expence, no interceſſion ſhould prevent his bringing the criminal to condign puniſhment. The Venetian common people are all appriſed of his reſolution; and that no Engliſhman has been murdered he aſcribes to this meaſure.

How Mr. Sharp could venture to tell ſuch a ſtory I cannot poſſibly conceive. I have had the honour of being, for a long while, very intimately acquainted with that Engliſh reſident in Venice; I have a thouſand times talked with him

about the chearful nature of the common people there, of whom he had certainly no bad opinion, and to whom, inſtead of being terrible, as Mr. Sharp would inſinuate, he had ſo endeared himſelf with his affability, that, as he was walking about, they would often ſtop and bleſs him loudly. *Caro quel muſo; ciera de imperador: fieſtu benedeto: benedeta quela to panza,* and other ſuch hearty and comical expreſſions he was regaled with, and many times a day; which probably had not been the caſe, had he threatened them, upon his arrival, by any *loud proclamation.*

A proclamation, if I underſtand it right, is a public notice given by means of a crier. But did the Engliſh reſident give notice by means of a crier, that he would *bring to puniſhment* any Venetian who ſhould a[illegible]nate an Engliſhman? No certainly; becauſe foreign miniſters have no ſuch right in the countries where they are ſent to reſide, and are, under no pretence, allowed to threaten the

the ſubjects of other ſovereigns. Did he go himſelf about the ſtreets and canals of Venice, publiſhing his intention with a loud voice? No, certainly; becauſe this had been even more ridiculous than the abſurdity we combat. Did he apply to the Venetian government with a memorial, and get the proclamation made by their order? No, certainly; becauſe murder is puniſhed with death in Venice as well as any where elſe; and a bare ſurmiſe that it was not, had been highly offenſive and intolerably injurious to the Venetian government. Did he only declare his intention privately; that is, to the very few people whom he knew there *on his firſt arrival?* But how can a private declaration, made to three or four acquaintance at moſt, be pompouſly termed a loud proclamation, which appriſed the whole body of the Venetian common people of his intention? And how could the reſident think that a private declaration, made to a few, would have efficacy enough to fright the whole people of Venice out of

their

their ſtabbing nature, and think afterwards that it actually frighted them out of it? Let us turn the pretended loud proclamation which way we pleaſe, it will always be impoſſible to reconcile it with common ſenſe and probability. And if it is impoſſible to make it only probable, how could any man have the temerity to vouch it as true?

But Mr. Sharp wanted to give a body to the phantoms of his ſickly brain. He wanted, in one of his fits of good-nature, to blacken the Italians; and could ſtick at nothing in order to prove his calumnious poſition, that our low people are all murderers and aſſaſſins. He was not even aware, that by ſuch a falſe aſſertion he was bringing in queſtion the conſummate prudence and circumſpection of an Engliſh miniſter, who, by his wiſe conduct, has made himſelf the greateſt favourite of the Venetians, both noble and plebeian, and given, at the ſame time, ſo much ſatisfaction to his own court, that he has got himſelf promoted to a

higher employment. It is then an abſolute fact, that no Engliſhman was ever aſſaſſinated in Venice, as far as any living man can remember: therefore it could by no means enter that miniſter's head to guard againſt any crime of this kind, having no imaginable foundation for apprehending that ſuch a thing would ever happen during his reſidentſhip; and he could not have decently thought of any loud proclamation, or even private declaration, but in caſe it had been an eſtabliſhed faſhion there to murder Engliſhmen by way of amuſement.

That every murderer is puniſhed in Venice with death, it would be highly ridiculous to ſet earneſtly about proving; and Mr. Sharp may perhaps have heard, that a very little time before his arrival there, one count Nogarola of Verona was publicly put to death in Venice for murder. It may be true, for aught I know, that a man was hanged at Naples, as Mr. Sharp tells us, for having aſſaſſinated an Engliſhman. But I cannot, without difficulty,

ficulty, believe him when he adds, that the Engliſh envoy there was under a neceſſity of being *extremely active in bringing that criminal to the gallows*; and that the ſame envoy gave up five or ſix murderers who had taken ſanctuary within the privileges of his walls; that *they were clapped in jail, and yet found means of being diſcharged the next day*. Mr. Sharp deals ſo largely in big words and exaggerations, and his fondneſs for the marvellous betrays him ſo often into miſrepreſentations, that I wiſh he had added ſuch circumſtances to his ſtories, as to render them probable at leaſt. His reflections on the Italian government imply ſuch atrocious accuſations, that he ought to have taken more care to prove his aſſertions. It is, for inſtance, a groſs miſrepreſentation his ſaying, that the church *throughout Italy* ſhelters murderers and aſſaſſins. In the Venetian dominions, as well as in ſome others, no church is a ſanctuary for ſuch criminals; and in many places, though the church be a ſanctuary for petty

debtors, it does not even ſcreen bankrupts. But to point out every place, in which the church is, or is not, a ſanctuary, and to note down all the different kinds of crimes for which the church (where it is a ſanctuary) allows or denies a ſhelter, would be too prolix a detail in the great variety of Italian governments. I therefore ſay drily, that in the Venetian dominions, the church is no ſanctuary at all, and that in Piedmont the church allows ſhelter not even to bankrupts, though it does to petty debtors; and this is enough to prove that Mr. Sharp has been guilty of miſrepreſentation on this particular ſubject. And when he tells us, that at Florence *his eyes were tired with the view of an aſſaſſin who had taken refuge on the ſteps before a church*, I muſt ſtill ſuſpect, what is very poſſible, that he calls by this name ſome pickpocket, or ſome ſimple robber, becauſe I know that the common people at Florence, as well as throughout the world, are often ignorant of the true import of words, and will often

often call *aſſaſſino's* even pickpockets and runaway debtors, as ſuch people are often called in England by the general titles of rogues and villains. Mr. Sharp, not being appriſed of the popular meaning of the word *aſſaſſino*, may have miſtaken the fellow on thoſe ſteps for a murderer. However I give this only as a conjecture of mine, grounded on Mr. Sharp's ignorance of our language, on his groſs careleſſneſs of enquiry, and on the malignant propenſity which he betrays at every turn, of preſenting every thing in Italy in the worſt light.

Mr. Sharp expatiates, in very emphatical terms, on the great readineſs with which the common people of Italy draw their knives and ſtab one another. He goes even ſo far, as to call the Neapolitans in particular, *A nation diabolical in their nature*; though, forgetting himſelf here and there, he acquaints his readers, that the Neapolitans *behave peaceably* on many occaſions, where the common people of England would be outrageous. But how

far he is right or wrong in his account of the general nature of the Italians, I will tell him in the next chapter, and will endeavour to give a truer idea of our common people than he could poſſibly form in his ſhort ramble, totally unprovided, as he was, of ſure means of information.

CHAP. V.

THE common people are far from being all alike throughout Italy; and there is, for inſtance, a very remarkable difference between thoſe at Naples and thoſe of Bologna; thoſe of Rome and thoſe of Venice; thoſe of Ancona or Florence, and thoſe of Milan, Turin, or Genoa. However, upon the whole, they are, in general, humble, courteous, loving, and of a friendly diſpoſition. They are civil to ſuch a degree, that in towns they will always take care to give the wall to any body

body who has a tolerable appearance, and pull off their hats, in the country, whenever a gentleman goes by. Treat them with kindneſs, and call them often by their chriſtian names, and you may depend upon their moſt ſincere attachment. Inſtead of having any antipathy to ſtrangers, they are fond of them to an unaccountable degree. *A ſtranger* is no very honourable appellation in England. In ſome parts of Spain, and ſtill more in Portugal, it is opprobrious: but in ſome parts of Italy, *A ſtranger* means *a fine fellow*; and in ſome others, *a wiſe man*: I mean always amongſt the common people. Let any body with a foreign dreſs or accent ſpeak in their hearing, the Italians will imperceptibly ſteal near, and liſten with attention to his words; then go home and tell their wives, children, or friends what they have heard; and ſeldom omit, in the warm elation of their goodneſs, a little embroidery of their own, in commendation of the ſtranger. They are credulous, becauſe they are ignorant; and

ignorant they certainly are to a great degree, as few of them can read or write. They are chearful for the greateſt part; which does not imply a cruel diſpoſition or temper; and love ſinging, fiddling, and dancing ſo paſſionately, that, after church on holidays, no maſter or miſtreſs muſt think of having their young maids or footmen at home before night, as they will abſolutely go where there is a dance, generally in ſome field or other open place adjacent to their towns or villages; and there keep their legs in motion in the merrieſt manner till ſunſet. The men, on ſuch occaſions, pay the fiddles, giving ſome money to them before they begin their minuets, furlana's, ciaccona's, or corrente's. As ſuch dances are conſtantly kept in the eyes of the public, you may be ſure that the women put always on their modeſteſt looks; nor would any married woman be found there, if her huſband were not of the party. This is general. But it is ſo hard to ſay any thing univerſal of Italy, that I muſt ſay

en paſſant, that dancing on holidays is not permitted, or not common, in the Pope's dominions.

The Italians are no rioters, and hate confuſion; and they are, for the greateſt part, total ſtrangers to the idea of ſedition; ſo that they ſcarcely ever riſe againſt government, not even in time of the greateſt hardſhips. Few of the Italian nations will ſuffer themſelves to be ſeized by a violent and general rage once in a century, except at Naples, when the want of bread grows quite inſupportable; but in the Venetian dominions, in Tuſcany, in Lombardy, in Piedmont, and in other parts of Italy, I never heard of the leaſt popular inſurrection. When they meet in large crowds, they do not turn inſolent and ferocious, as it often happens in other countries; and Mr. Sharp himſelf took notice of vaſt multitudes, which behaved with ſuch compoſure and quiet, that he could not help wondering; and he owns that it had not been the caſe in London, where, when a large body of the

the common people come together, *ſome are ſeen quarrelling, ſome fighting, ſome laughing, one half of them drunk, and all noiſy: and to complete the confuſion, two or three dead cats will be hurled about to one another.*

When the Italians go to any opera, or play, or any other public ſpectacle, they applaud if they are pleaſed; and, if not, they talk to their acquaintance when they have any by, or keep ſilent; and never hiſs or pelt the actors, and never throw any thing into the orcheſtra or the pit, totally unacquainted with the brutal manner of annoying or hurting thoſe, who neither annoy nor hurt them. At Venice only there is a cuſtom no leſs naſty than infamous, that of ſpitting from the boxes into the pit. This cuſtom certainly aroſe from the contempt that the haughty nobles originally had, and have ſtill, for the people. Yet the people ſuffer moſt patiently this inſult; and, what is ſtill more ſurpriſing, love thoſe very nobles who treat them in ſuch an outrageous

outrageous manner; ſcarcely giving vent to a little anger with ſome ſhort and comical exclamation, when their hands and faces feel the conſequence of this beaſtly cuſtom.

The Italians are ſo tender-hearted, that they will ſhed tears at any mournful ſtory; and when any criminal is executed, you will ſee the ſtouteſt amongſt them weep moſt cordially, pray moſt devoutly, and give what little money they can ſpare to have maſſes celebrated for the repoſe of the poor ſuffering ſoul: and I think, that ſometimes I called them fools for being ſo much affected on ſuch occaſions; though I own I could not help ſympathiſing often with men, whom Mr. Sharp is pleaſed to call *diabolical in their nature.*

It would be endleſs to tell how our common people are hoſpitable to ſtrangers, ſerviceable to one another, and liberal of whatever they can ſpare to the neceſſitous; ſtill keeping up the old friendly cuſtom of preſenting each other

a little

a little bread when they bake; ſitting, walking, chatting, ſinging, dancing, or working together, always in good humour, and always pleaſed when in company. They are moſt rigidly religious; or moſt fooliſhly ſuperſtitious, as Mr. Sharp would phraſe it; nor would they ever dare to go to bed, without firſt ſaying loud their roſaries over, or ſinging their litanies, the whole family together kneeling before an image; never miſſing their maſſes and benedictions morning and evening every holiday; making their confeſſions and communions generally once a month; beating their breaſts in the fervour of their devout ejaculations; never breaking lent or meagre days, if they are well; and if they are ill, never without aſking firſt leave for ſo doing of their eccleſiaſtical ſuperiors. Their religion is carried to ſuperſtition undoubtedly; but ſtill they are religious.

However, though the common people of Italy be thus humble, courteous, peaceable,

peaceable, chearful, hoſpitable, compaſſionate, and religious, they have, on the other hand, ſuch quick feelings, that even a diſreſpectful word or glance from an equal will ſuddenly kindle a good number of them, and make them fall upon one another with their knives. I ſay from an equal; becauſe from a ſuperior, that is, from one who has the appearance of a gentleman, they will bear much before they let their paſſion looſe, being from their infancy accuſtomed to a very ſtrict ſubordination. When a gentleman happens to ſee any of them quarrelling, he uſually ſteps between without incurring any danger, and if he cannot part them directly with expoſtulation, he will do it by raiſing his cane upon them both, and have the thanks of the by-ſtanders for it. But if no gentleman interpoſes, they will not be cooled in haſte, and ſome miſchief will be done; eſpecially if there is any matter of love at bottom, which is generally the only great ſource of quarrels amongſt our common people. In matters

of love they muſt mutually beware how they deal; for he that has firſt declared himſelf the *inamorato* of a maiden, muſt have her all to himſelf; nor will he brook to hear a rival play on the guitar, or ſing ſongs at night under her window without his previous leave, which however is always granted when aſked; and the aſking, as well as the granting, conſidered by both parties as a civility to be returned upon occaſion. Without that previous leave, the reſentment of a common Italian flames out, and is not limited to his rival only; for, if he has room to ſuſpect his miſtreſs of fickleneſs, after ſhe has given her conſent to his courtſhip, ſhe will be herſelf in danger. However the reader muſt not think that girls in Italy are frequently ſtabbed by their ſweethearts, becauſe, in general, they pique themſelves of as much fidelity to their lovers, as their lovers to them. Yet the caſe comparatively ſpeaking, will happen in Italy oftener than in any of the countries I have viſited; and it actually happened

in

in the neighbourhood of Ancona while I was there, that a young peaſant got himſelf into the gallies by giving a dangerous blow to a pretty wench; and enquiring after the opinion that people of their rank had of this affair, I found, that both men and women were, upon the whole, rather favourable to the fellow, who had given her no motive for ficklenefs, and thought his ſentence too hard; not pitying the girl much, as ſhe had proved a jilt.

This touchy temper in our low people I am far from commending. Yet, if any thing was to be ſaid in extenuation of the few crimes that it cauſes, one might ſay, that as ſoon as a common Italian has ſet his heart upon a maiden, ſhe is ſure, when married, that he will do his beſt as long as he lives to maintain her, and never ſwerve from his conjugal fidelity.

And here I muſt remark, that whatever Mr. Sharp may affirm of the unparalleled indolence and ſluggiſhneſs of the common people in Italy, a point which he knows

in

in his conſcience he never was at the trouble of examining, I may affirm, on the contrary, that it is not uncommon to find in the cottage of an Italian peaſant the implements of agriculture along with the net and the loom; and that a great many of them are, at once, huſbandmen, fiſhermen, and weavers. See them work in the field, or any other place, they will redouble their diligence if they perceive that you mind what they are doing. There is a ſpirit of glory, or, if you pleaſe, of vanity in them, which I have not obſerved in Engliſhmen of the ſame claſs: and when you depart, they will never do as peaſants and all ſorts of working people do in England, where they ſo very frequently aſk you ſomething to drink. The Italians aſk nothing; and the greateſt part of them would refuſe, if you were to offer; and even deſire you not to miſtake them for beggars.

Mr. Sharp has taken notice, that *the whole face of Tuſcany is covered with farm-houſes and cottages, which are not as in France*

France or in England, thatched huts with walls of mud; but built with ſtone or brick: that *the peaſantry looked florid, lively, contented, and are ſmartly dreſſed.* If Mr. Sharp had looked carefully through other parts of Italy as he did in Tuſcany; or rather, if in other parts of Italy he had met with ſuch judicious gentlemen as his friend the abbot Nicolini, (who having been a long while in England, knew which way to turn an Engliſhman's eyes) Mr. Sharp would then have ſeen the peaſantry live much after the ſame manner in the Venetian provinces, in all Lombardy, in the ſtate of Genoa, in Piedmont, and even in ſome diſtricts of the papal and Neapolitan dominions.

Mr. Sharp puzzles himſelf in ſearching for the reaſon why the Tuſcan peaſants live, in all outward appearance, well, and dreſs ſmartly; and is pleaſed to dream, that *their air of opulence is derived from the time of the Medici's family*; being loth to attribute the effect to its true cauſe; that is, to their ſobriety and love of labour.

If theſe are not the true cauſes of *their air of opulence*, we muſt think that each peaſant in Tuſcany has inherited an eſtate, which is come down to him unimpaired from a progenitor, who got it in the happy days of the Medici's family; which ſuppoſition would be too abſurd. Sobriety and love of labour make the peaſants of Tuſcany live in the manner Mr. Sharp ſaw them live; (if it is true that he has minded them) and if many of the Genoeſe peaſants inhabit houſes that are often miſtaken for gentlemen's habitations, it is to be attributed to a degree of both theſe qualites in them, which is almoſt incredible. They will cut flat a ſharp rock; cover it with earth, fetched ſometimes from a conſiderable diſtance; and there plant a vine or fig-tree, or ſow it with ſallad at leaſt; ſo that it is proverbial there, that *the peaſants eat ſtones, (i contadini mangiano ſaſſi)* alluding to this piece of their huſbandry. I have ſeen peaſants in Italy work even part of the night in their vineyards and fields by moonſhine,

moonſhine, while their wives and children were aſleep; and, by the bye, I have taken notice of the ſame thing in the kingdom of Arragon and in Catalonia: and yet the Spaniards in general are moſt mercileſly run down for the greateſt idlers and ſluggards, by many ſuch accurate travellers as Mr. Sharp. But ſince Mr. Sharp has brought me on the banks of Arno, I beg of him to let me take notice, that his account of Tuſcany does not quite agree with that of biſhop Burnet. Burnet ſays, that *as one goes over Tuſcany, it appears ſo diſpeopled, that one cannot but wonder to find a country that has been a ſcene of ſo much action and ſo many wars, now ſo forſaken and ſo poor, that in many places the ſoil is quite neglected for want of hands to cultivate it; and in other places, where there are more people, they look ſo poor, and their houſes are ſuch miſerable ruins, that it is ſcarce accountable how there ſhould be ſo much poverty in ſo rich a country, which is all full of beggars.* And a few lines after, *All the way from Florence,*

through the great duke's country, looked ſo ſad, that I concluded it muſt be the moſt diſpeopled of all Italy. Here is a picture! and how well do theſe travel-writers contraſt with each other! But let us come back to our diabolical aſſaſſins, as Mr. Sharp expreſſes it.

I own, and agree, that murderers in Italy are not brought quickly enough to puniſhment, through a want of activity in their proſecution. Excepting Piedmont, where juſtice, in caſe of murder, is exerted with tolerable diſpatch, in all the parts of Italy I have viſited, the execution of the laws is too remiſs, in my opinion; and in Venice and Rome moſt particularly, where a criminal of this kind is kept many months in jail before his trial be over.

But there is an invincible cauſe why in Italy ſome murderers will ſometimes avoid the gallows; and this is, the facility of eſcape out of the ſtate where they offend.

Every

Every body knows that Italy is parcelled out into many ſovereignties. A criminal, who happens to be a little diſtant from the center of any of them when he commits his crime, needs but run a little away, to be out of the circumference too. And how can the magiſtrates, be they ever ſo vigilant, ſend after people, who in a few hours are quite out of their reach?

Then an Italian is not ſo eaſily arreſted as an Engliſhman; for, when he is conſcious that he will be hanged or ſent to the gallies, if he falls into the hands of juſtice, he will not peaceably ſurrender to any man unarmed, but will fight in his own defence moſt deſperately till he dies. The Engliſh have lately had an inſtance of the Italian fury in ſuch caſes; and cannot, as yet, have forgot the terrible reſiſtance made by two Italian ſailors, that broke from Maidſtone jail. Then our people, from a miſtaken principle of humanity, and ſtill more miſtaken point of honour, will not play the *ſbirris*, or

catchpoles, and give the leaſt aſſiſtance to the officers of juſtice in the execution of their duty; and you might ſooner bring an Italian to ſuffer martyrdom, than force him to ſtop any man purſued by them. The magiſtrates are therefore obliged to ſend many of thoſe officers, or *ſbirris*, well provided with fire-arms, in queſt of runaway delinquents. The aſſembling and directing a troop of thoſe officers cannot often be done in a moment; and in the mean time a criminal haſtens away towards a neighbouring ſtate. It is true that the Italian ſovereigns reciprocally give up their criminals to each other, if they are caught; and count Nogarola, who had made his eſcape into Piedmont, after having committed a murder in Verona, was arreſted near Turin, and ſent to the Venetians, who put him to death, as I ſaid already. But a very little reflection will ſhow any thinking man, that this expedient cannot be of any great efficacy againſt this evil, in a country conſtituted as Italy is.

Theſe

Theſe remarks ought not to have eſcaped Mr. Sharp, when he ſpoke of the great facility with which murderers often avoid puniſhment in Italy, and not caſt his oblique reflections upon all our magiſtrates indiſcriminately, as if they were guilty throughout Italy of the greateſt ſupineneſs in the moſt atrocious caſes.

It happened once in Venice, that a baker was found near a man who had been ſtabbed. A knife was ſticking into the corpſe, and the baker happened to have a ſcabbard in his pocket which fitted that knife moſt exactly. Upon this the poor fellow was condemned and hanged, though quite innocent of the murder, as it was proved a little time after his execution. From this accident, a cuſtom aroſe in Venice *, that before ſentence was paſſed upon any convicted criminal, an officer, appointed for that purpoſe,

* This cuſtom laſted many centuries; but of late it has ceaſed, which it ought not to have done, in my opinion.

cried to the judges, *Ricordatevi del povero fornaro, Remember the poor baker.* Hence the judges in Venice, and in many other parts of Italy, are not eaſily ſatisfied with proofs, though ever ſo evident, when a man's life is at ſtake; and hence the general ſlowneſs of proſecution, and long delays of puniſhments, as we are early taught, that we never can be too cautious in pronouncing about life and death. But ſtrangers will eaſily indulge their vanity, and make a parade of wiſdom, by finding fault, taking very ſeldom the trouble of inveſtigating the reaſons of things. Mr. Sharp has then no other ſtandard for his judgments but his own country. Whatever in any other country is not done after the manner of England, you may be ſure he will directly, and with ſurpriſing ſagacity, find out to be wrong, abominably wrong. But though his way of arguing may prove him a very good Engliſhman, yet it will not intitle him to any juſt claims to the character of an impartial obſerver of other countries.

And

And though ſome Italian may ſometimes be apt to give a ſtab to his rival or to his miſtreſs in a fit of angry jealouſy, yet Mr. Sharp had no reaſon to repreſent the common people of Italy as having all the diabolical nature of murderers. To be *naturally inclined to murder*, implies a diſpoſition *naturally cruel*. But the Italians are not of a diſpoſition *naturally cruel*. On the contrary, they have undeniably ſome of thoſe characteriſtics which cannot abſolutely ſubſiſt with cruelty; namely *chearfulneſs* and *compaſſion*. Therefore they are *not naturally cruel*, though their quick feelings may make ſome of them reſent an injury with an act that has the appearance of cruelty. They ſhudder at murder, as well as the common people of England, or any other common people. By Mr. Sharp's outrageous logic, an Italian would have a right to call the people of England all incendiaries, becauſe he happens to read ſometimes in the Gazette of rewards offered for the diſcovery of the authors of anonymous incendiary letters.

letters. What a number of bitter reflections would he have caſt upon us, if he had happened to hear in Italy of a daughter poiſoning her father, a niece her uncle, or a wife her huſband? If he had heard of four thief-takers infernally combining ſo, as to bring fifty or ſixty poor devils to the gallows, for the ſake of a paultry reward, and not one of them put to death by public juſtice, for want of a law pointing out that particular caſe? If he had heard of a man murdering his concubine, though with child; or of an elderly matron beating to death ſome little girls, that ſhe might rob an hoſpital of a few pounds? Yet ſuch ſhocking accidents will happen amidſt the beſt and moſt poliſhed nations: and writers muſt be looked upon as very diſingenuous, when they attribute to the general character of nations the few helliſh doings of a very few individuals. No ſociety could long ſubſiſt, if the plurality were horribly wicked, and *diabolical in their nature*.

Let

Let me then conclude this chapter with obſerving, that I have now been for ſeventeen years a conſtant reader of the Engliſh news-papers: that in this long ſpace of time more than ten thouſand Engliſh (maſters and ſervants) have been running up and down Italy, and the greateſt part of them certainly not the beſt men that this country produces with regard to morals and prudence. Yet can any of my readers recollect of having ever read in the news-papers of any Engliſhman *treacherouſly murdered* in that land, ſo famous for its frequent murders and cuſtomary aſſaſſinations? Would this have been the caſe in any country, if ten thouſand Italians, fluſhed with youth and money, and lovers of the bottle into the bargain, had run up and down it, with ſcarcely any other view but that of giving themſelves up to all manner of lewdneſs and debauchery.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

IF the low people of Italy are by no means indebted to Mr. Sharp for the character he has drawn of them in his good-natured way, thoſe of rank are ſtill leſs beholden to him upon the ſame account, as he has likewiſe inſiſted that, both male and female, they are all plunged in the moſt vile and ſhocking immorality.

His manner of introducing his ſubject is really artful enough. He ſets out with informing his readers, that *in ancient days wives were immured in Italy, and huſbands were jealous; but that no women on earth are now under ſo little reſtraint as thoſe of Italy, where the word jealouſy is now become obſolete.*

I ſhall leave to others the trouble of examining how juſtly this fine proem ſquares with the notions that philoſophers entertain

entertain of the origin, progreſs, and effects of our natural paſſions; nor will I attempt to prove, that love, and its attendant, jealouſy, as well as all other human affections, are pretty equally diſtributed amongſt mankind, and their conſequences pretty uniformly the ſame wherever there are men. I might as well ſet about proving that lions and rats are only lions and rats in particular diſtricts, and that they are cats and owls in other places.

Let me then only inſpect into that vaſt treaſure of cuſtoms and manners, with regard to matrimony, brought over to England by Mr. Sharp, together with his vaſt collection of murders and aſſaſſinations.

In Italy then, according to this acute obſerver, *every lady that is married has a cicisbeo*; that is, ſhe has a young gentleman, whoſe chief employment is that of diſhonouring her huſband whenever ſhe chuſes. A cicisbeo is kept by *every lady* for this purpoſe; and *in ſo notorious a manner*,

manner, that every body who knows her, knows him of courſe likewiſe.

The cicisbeo, beſides this noble employment, *is obliged to ſit with her alone in the opera-box, hardly ſeen by the ſpectators, as the opera-houſes in Italy are very dark: and after the opera, he is to have a tete-a-tete at her caſine, where they ſtay ſometimes the whole night, taking maſs in the morning in their way home. The caſine is a room* hired* (Mr. Sharp forgot to tell whether hired by the cicisbeo or the lady) *at a diſtance from the lady's houſe, and hired for the whole year. A caſine is always ſacred to the lady and her cicisbeo; and the lady's huſband never approaches it. Was the huſband ever to viſit it, he would be laughed at by every body, becauſe in Italy it is ſo*

* Mr Sharp has never entered a caſine, otherwiſe he would have ſaid, that it is an apartment of many ſmall rooms, and often a whole ſmall houſe, taken, for the ſake of convenience, by the Venetian noblemen, in the neighbourhood of St. Mark's, where the ſenate and all the magiſtrates aſſemble, and where every thing of buſineſs or pleaſure is tranſacted.

ridiculous

ridiculous for husbands and wives to be seen together, that there is no instance of such a phenomenon. Should any married lady think of being true to her husband, and be averse to the taking a cicisbeo into service, she would be obliged to live for ever at home, and no other lady would ever dare to appear with her any where. The republic of Venice is a second Cyprus, where all are votaries to Venus. There parents have very little fondness for their children; there the boys are looked upon as children of the republic, and there the girls are early sent to convents, where they are seldom or never visited by fathers and mothers. The cicisbeo's are partly slaves and partly tyrants to their ladies; and the ladies are as jealous of their cicisbeo's, as, in other countries, of their husbands. It is impossible to refrain from laughter, seeing men of the gravest characters going to the casine: men that you would have suspected of hypocrisy, superstition, and fanaticism, rather than of gallantry.

One would think, that, after having gone so far with such a description of the

manners and cuſtoms of a country, a writer might ſtop, and even begin to be afraid to paſs for a drunken ſlanderer, even in the opinion of the moſt credulous. But Mr. Sharp, far from harbouring any ſuch unmanly fear, only fetches his breath a while; then goes on moſt undauntedly, and with ſtill greater and greater ferocity. He has even the boldneſs of proteſting in a moſt ſolemn manner, that his aſſertions *are to be depended upon, and true, upon his honour, as he ſpeaks upon good grounds, and not from a ſpirit of detraction.*

The affection between huſbands and wives (continues Mr. Sharp) *in the climate of Italy, is an unknown paſſion. In Italy men and women are always tied together in wedlock without the leaſt participation of their own; and it happens very ſeldom that the parties know one another before marriage, ſeldom viſiting twice before the day of conſummation, the bride being to that moment locked up in a convent. There* (that is, throughout Italy) *the abominable and infernal faſhion of taking a cicisbeo into ſervice immediately*

diately after having quitted the altar, is the cauſe that eſtranges all matrimonial affection. There children have very little tendency to ſupport the friendſhip and harmony of the married ſtate, as the certain knowledge every huſband has of his wife's attachment to a lover, extinguiſhes all ſocial love and fondneſs to the offspring. There young unmarried ladies are never invited to any dinner, as their innocence and ſprightlineſs is a pleaſure utterly unknown, or neglected, in Italy. There a huſband is ſure, that the eldeſt born only belongs to him, provided he has been born in the firſt year of his marriage. Should one half of the married ladies deny themſelves cicisbeo's, or live innocently with them, the other half would deſpiſe them. I have ſeen myſelf at Naples (where he never entered a ſingle nobleman's or gentleman's houſe) *princeſſes and ducheſſes, with their cicisbeo's at their ſides, viſiting their friends with the greateſt unconcernedneſs. When you invite five ladies to dinner, you lay ten plates of courſe, as each lady brings her cicisbeo with her. The nature of the climate makes*

huſbands ſo fickle, (this he was told by a grave Neapolitan gentleman, a great meteorologiſt, I ſuppoſe) *that they cannot continue conſtant to their wives many months; ſo that the poor women are driven into this meaſure of taking cibiſbeo's into ſervice.*

This is the picture Mr. Sharp has drawn of the cuſtoms and manners of Italy; and to give it the laſt ſtroke in the true Michelangelo way, he concludes, that *the diſtinction of good and bad; that is, of chaſte and diſſolute, is hardly known there; and that the generality of ladies in Florence have each of them three cicisbeo's; the firſt, called the cicisbeo of dignity; the ſecond, the ciceſbeo who picks up the gloves and the fan when the lady drops them; and the third, the ſubſtantial cicisbeo.*

I ſhould certainly have been ſurprized at the temerity of theſe remarks, if I had not been made acquainted with the manner by which Mr. Sharp came by his information. At Naples, it ſeems, he got a very fine fellow for a temporary ſervant, whoſe name was Antonio. A true temporary

porary ſervant, fit for any Engliſhman on his travels.

This Antonio, who, by what I have heard of him, piques himſelf much upon his good education, upon his extenſive knowledge of men and manners, and upon his having written comedies, as he ſays, full as good as Goldoni's, was the chief oracle conſulted by his good maſter about the cuſtoms and manners of Italy.

Mr. Sharp enjoyed, as I ſaid, very little health all the time he was at Naples, where he wrote the greateſt part of the above ribaldry about huſbands, wives, and cicisbeo's. As he knew no native there, and ſeldom ſaw any of his countrymen, the clever Antonio was almoſt the only perſon, beſides his family, that he could converſe with. With Antonio therefore he uſed to cloſet over night, and hold a private conference of ſome hours. When the conference was over, Antonio went down to the kitchen, and there entertained his fellow-ſervants with the Account of the book that his

maſter was compoſing with his aſſiſtance. "How? A book with your aſſiſtance?" "Yes, upon my honour, replies Antonio; "and my maſter liſtens eagerly to what "I tell him of our lords and ladies; and "holds his quill in his fingers, and ſuſ- "pends my talk every minute, that he "may make memorandums of every par- "ticular I relate: but be ſure I tell him "nothing that is diſhonourable to our "country, as I am, you know, always "an Italian in my heart *."

Out of thoſe noble memorandums it is very probable that Mr. Sharp formed his itinerary letters, not entertaining the leaſt doubt about the abilities and veracity of his valet-de-place; and thus was he led into an immenſe chaos of inconſiſtency

* What Antonio had occaſion to tell often to his fellow-ſervants at Naples, he freely repeats now in England. I never ſaw him to this day, *October* 16, 1767; but his affirmations came ſome months ago to my knowledge, as well as to that of almoſt all the Italians now in London. Antonio, I hear, is but lately come from Italy with a new Engliſh maſter.

and

and abſurdity well deſerving to be expoſed, as it is by no means pardonable in a man of his age, of his character, and of his knowledge.

That Mr. Sharp had at Naples this Antonio for a ſervant, I am ſure he will not deny: and he will not deny neither, that he uſed to cloſet often with him, his quill in his hand for ſome hours, taking down memorandums of what the fellow was pleaſed to tell him. Mr. Sharp will perhaps deny his having got the chief things he has ſaid about cicifbeo's from Antonio, though he held his pen while Antonio prattled away in their nightly tete-a-tetes. But how will Mr. Sharp be able to convince any ſenſible man, that he had from higher people than Antonio, the unnatural and impoſſible things he has told in the paſſages quoted above from his book? How will he be able to perſuade, that there is a vaſt tract of land in a Chriſtian country, where ſome hundred thouſands of huſbands are moſt regularly and

moſt infamouſly wronged by their wives immediately after marriage? That this is a faſhion? That thoſe huſbands know for certain they are thus treated, and yet put up with it moſt unconcernedly, and with a perfect acquieſcence, only withdrawing their *ſocial love* from their wives, and their *paternal tenderneſs* from their children, continuing however to live with them under the ſame roof?

Huſbands and wives in Italy uſe no ſeparate beds, not even in the hotteſt months: this is a notorious fact. How then can any reaſonable perſon be brought to believe, that all the huſbands of a large country, or thoſe of the better ſort only, (if Mr. Sharp will have it ſo) are ſo utterly inſenſible to honour, as to receive to their beds the warm harlots juſt come from the caſine towards morning? And how can he make any one believe, that ſome hundred thouſands of wives become all harlots immediately after having quitted the altar? And that this happens

pens in a country, according to his own account, overwhelmed with bigottry and ſuperſtition, which implies an exuberance of religion? And that this happens in a country, where women (ſtill according to his own account) are all ſhut early in convents, where it is to be ſuppoſed that religion is the chief ingredient in their education? What? No religion in women who have been taught almoſt nothing elſe from their childhood to the years of matrimonial maturity? No fear, no ſhame, no modeſty, no continence in that part of mankind, which nature has originally made fearful, ſhameful, modeſt, and continent? And then no jealouſy, no anger, not the leaſt reſentment in men, made originally by nature ſo proud, ſo iraſcible, ſo impetuous? Ha! Nothing but an infamous proſtitution on one ſide, and nothing but a perfect apathy on the other? And this in a country famed for the quick temper and hot imagination of its inhabitants? And Mr. Sharp will

have it *a phenomenon never ſeen there*, that of a huſband and wife ſhewing themſelves together in public? And that wicked wives will think themſelves diſhonoured by keeping company with good wives? If this is not all Antonio's ſtuff, whoſe ſtuff can it be?

But pray, good Mr. Sharp, is this the true courſe and general progreſs of nature? Or are the men and women in Italy of a different ſpecies from thoſe of other countries? You may anſwer in a ſober hour, that nature is pretty uniform every where, and that the Italian men and women are juſt ſuch creatures as the men and women of other countries. But if they are of the ſame ſpecies, how do they come to act ſo diametrically oppoſite to all the men and women of all other countries in marriage; that is, in the moſt critical buſineſs of life? In a buſineſs, which intereſts the generality of human beings infinitely more than any other? You anſwer again, that *it is the climate which makes*

makes all Italian huſbands fickle: and do you not ſee, my Britiſh philoſopher, that you attribute to the climate a power of making ſo many automatons of human beings, and that you are abſurd beyond abſurdity in ſaying ſo? That Antonio himſelf would bluſh with ſhame, if he was accuſed of being ſo pitiful a reaſoner on human nature? But if the climate makes ſo many automatons of the Italians, and if their affections and actions are in the power of the climate, and not in their own, to what end do you repreſent them as moſt abominably wicked, and endeavour, with all your might, to raiſe an abhorrence of them in your countrymen? You might as well have endeavoured to render odious to them all thoſe peculiar productions of Italy, which owe their exiſtence to that climate. I can allow, without any great difficulty, that the generality of the ladies in England behave with more reſerve and circumſpection than thoſe of Italy; and I can eaſily be

be brought to believe, that neither the opera nor the play, neither Ranelagh nor Vauxhall, neither Almack's nor madam Cornely's, can taint, in the leaſt, the purity of Engliſh female virtue, and throw any lady off her guard. I will even allow, that Venice in particular is a town infinitely more corrupted in point of chaſtity than London itſelf; and that in Venice, as well as in a few other capital towns in Italy, there are ſome women of rank, who have forfeited all claim to the title of virtuous by their unconcealed debauchery. But while I allow this, Mr. Sharp muſt likewiſe allow me, that the ladies of thoſe towns in Italy, who have rendered themſelves infamous in the eye of reaſon and of religion, may eaſily be named in every one of thoſe towns: and the eaſy poſſibility of naming them implies, that their claſs is not very numerous. Mr. Sharp muſt allow me farther, that the number of the ladies who keep their character unſtained, is ſo large, as

to

to render his general accuſations a vile heap of calumnies. Add to this, that whatever the manners may be of a few ladies (or of many, if Mr. Sharp will have it ſo) in a few of the large towns of Italy, yet the ladies in the ſmall towns all over the country are neither better nor worſe than thoſe of the ſmall towns all over Europe, where the want of ſinful opportunities, the infrequency of bad example, the fear of idle tongues, the facility of detection, together with other motives of a higher nature, which operate more in ſmall than in large places, keep women in very good order.

Had Mr. Sharp been able to make ſuch reflections, he would certainly have been aware, that the character of a numerous nation does not depend on a few individuals ſcattered about half a dozen large towns; but that it depends on the many millions contained in two or three hundred ſmall ones, and in their territories. Had Mr. Sharp ſaid, that ſuch a

gentildonna

gentildonna in Venice, and ſuch a *principeſſa* in Naples are univerſally pointed out there for their immoral conduct, I might quickly have agreed with him. But when Mr. Sharp makes uſe of collective terms; when he ſays *the Venetian ladies, the Neapolitan ladies, the Florentine ladies,* and, what is ſtill worſe, THE ITALIAN LADIES, he muſt give me leave to tell him, that he vomits ſlander all the time he thinks himſelf ſpeaking oracles; for in the corrupted city of Venice itſelf, there are very many ladies poſſeſſed of the moſt exalted virtue. It is true that they are not commonly known to the Engliſh travellers: but was Mr. Sharp by, I could name to him ſome of the beſt female beings that ever adorned his country, whom I myſelf brought acquainted with ſome Venetian ladies, who certainly gave them no reaſon to be aſhamed of their acquaintance.

And how could then Mr. Sharp affirm, without taking ſhame to himſelf, that no Italian

Italian parent loves his children, when I am ſure he has ſeen innumerable times innumerable Italian fathers and mothers handing about their little ones, prettily dreſſed in various fanciful ways, and ſeen them oftener than in any other part he ever viſited? Burnet ſays, that *the Italians have a paſſion for their families, which is not known in other places*; and his obſervation is certainly juſt, as in the corrupted city of Venice itſelf the graver ſort of people often find fault with the general fondneſs of parents, even thoſe of the higheſt quality, becauſe they take too much delight in leading their boys and girls about St. Mark's ſquare, dreſſed like little huſſars and ſultana's, or like little ſhepherds and ſhepherdeſſes, and carrying them themſelves from houſe to houſe. The reproaches that our numerous fond parents often hear upon this article, are juſtly grounded on the danger of making thoſe boys and girls too early in love with ſhow and parade, with dreſs and vanity.

And how could Mr. Sharp ſay that the pleaſure of maiden innocence and ſprightlineſs is utterly unknown, or neglected, in Italy? Did he not ſee that this affirmation is incompatible with nature, as it implies a degree of brutality in a nation, whoſe predominant character, according to his own and all travellers accounts, is love and ſenſibility of heart? And how could he ſay, that young folks in Italy ſee one another but once or twice before the celebration of their marriages, when in Venice itſelf it is a general cuſtom, even among the chief nobility, to delay intended nuptials many months, and ſometimes a whole year, that the young couple may conceive an affection for one another? Juſt a little before Mr. Sharp's arrival in Venice, an intended marriage was ſuddenly broke between a young lady of the Barbarigo's, and the eldeſt ſon of the Procuratoreſſa Zen, (two of the greateſt families there) though the parties had been betrothed a full twelvemonth, though

all

all the wedding-preparations were made, and though the very epithalamium was printed and ready for publication: and this happened for no other reaſon but becauſe the bride took a diſguſt to the young man for his neglecting to court her with the uſual daily regularity. Theſe, Mr. Sharp, theſe are the cuſtoms in Venice with reſpect to marriages; and marriages in all other towns of Italy are contracted juſt as they are in all other Chriſtian countries. The great generally marry for the ſake of alliance or intereſt, without much conſulting inclination; and the little do as well as they can, exactly as people do in England; nor is it true, as Mr. Sharp affirms, that we put all our girls in convents, and keep them there until they marry, as I ſhall prove in another place. For ſhame then, Sir, thus to miſtake for indiſputable facts all the nonſenſe and waggery of your temporary footman in Naples! It was your clever Antonio, without any doubt, who made

you

you write down in one page, that *the Neapolitans never dine together*, and *that there is no ſuch cuſtom as to invite each other to dinner*; then in another page, that *at Naples when you invite five ladies to dinner, you muſt lay ten plates of courſe, becauſe each of them brings her cicisbeo with her*. How could you be ſo dull as not to ſee, that Antonio led you here in a flat contradiction? And how could you ſuffer yourſelf to be plunged by him into an ocean of nonſenſe, and ſet upon paper the ſtory of the three cicisbeo's at Florence, the ſubſtantial, the dignified, and the fan-picker? You meant with your book to make the Italians aſhamed of their country; but I am much more aſhamed of you, Sir, who could ſwallow ſuch ſtories, and yet walk upon two legs as well as any of them.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

TO all the above charges of ill-nature, of abſurdity, of falſhood, and even of downright calumny, Mr. Sharp will perhaps plead, that he gave a good word to the Roman ladies (in favour, I ſuppoſe, of his gentle friend the marchioneſs of Ceva); that he did obliquely let us underſtand, that they are *the chaſteſt women in Chriſtendom*; and that *even their cicisbeo's are ſuſpected to be innocent*. Mr. Sharp may urge beſides, that he has alſo proteſted, in the mildeſt terms, that *it hurts him a little that his accounts ſhould ſeem ſevere*; (*ſlanderous* had been a properer word) and that he deſired his correſpondent *to remark, that his cenſures regarded only the morals of the lower people, and the gallantry of the great*. But to theſe benign anſwers, which really imply ſome ſort of recantation, I muſt reply, that whenever in his book he

ſays any thing in favour of the Italians, he ſkips it over with two or three lines, which have no effect upon the mind of his reader, and cannot cancel the horrible idea he has given them of the Italians: but when he ſpeaks in their diſpraiſe, he ſearches carefully for the harſheſt expreſſions that his language can afford, in order to deſtroy even the little effect that his few and meagre praiſes could have produced. In order to perſuade his countrymen, that Italy is the moſt abominable country in the world, and that its inhabitants have more than one ſtanding ſyſtem of wickedneſs and iniquity, he heaps accuſations upon accuſations, and deriſion upon deriſion, in a hundred pages. What then ſignifies his gently ſaying here and there, that the Italians are ſober, that they are peaceable, that they are civil to ſtrangers, or other ſuch things? What ſignifies his ſaying, that the cicisbeo's of the Roman ladies are ſuſpected to be innocent, when he has

has already given his honour, that throughout the dominions of the Venetian commonwealth every individual is a votary to Venus? when he has already given us to underſtand, in a hundred places, that all married ladies throughout Italy are adultreſſes? What ſignifies his telling in one page, that his cenſures regard only the morals of the lower people, and the gallantry of the great, if in another he inſinuates, that in Italy there are few or no people of a middling condition? What ſignifies his commending, towards the end of his book, in a line or two, the pleaſantneſs and fertility of the country from Bologna to Turin, when he has already exerted his utmoſt eloquence in order to make us believe, that the whole of Italy is uncultivated and unpeopled, and that even the climate of Naples is worſe than that of England? Mr. Sharp is guilty of many fallacies of this kind, partly through ignorance, partly through careleſſneſs, and partly through malignity. I had heard

of him long before my laſt viſit to my native country, from ſome of my friends, who are likewiſe his friends; and his name was one of the Engliſh names that once I moſt reſpected. But I am ſorry to ſay, that the reading of his book has forced me to change my opinion, and that he has forfeited with me that character of goodneſs and candour which I had formerly conceived of him, as his performance is abſolutely not that of a good and candid man, but the production of a mind unjuſtly exaſperated againſt a people, whoſe individuals either knew him not, or, if they knew him, treated him with benevolence and civility, as they do all the Engliſh, and all other ſtrangers who viſit their country, without any narrowneſs on account of different tenets, though they be in general much attached to their own.

CHAP. VIII.

BY the ſeveral paſſages above quoted out of Mr. Sharp's book, and by many more which it is needleſs to quote, it plainly appears, that to the word *ciciſbeo* he annexes the idea of an *adulterer*, and that he makes both words perfectly ſynonimous. But Mr. Sharp is certainly wrong as uſual, as the Italians are far from giving ſuch a definition of that word. *Ciciſbeo* is a cant term, which originally ſignified no more than *a whiſperer*. Every body that knows Italian but tolerably, muſt know, that the letters *b* and *c* occur very frequently in it, followed by an *e* or an *i*. This frequent occurrence of *be* and *bi*, and of *ce* and *ci*, is the cauſe that when a perſon whiſpers, it ſeems that he does almoſt nothing elſe but repeat ſuch ſyllables. Hence *to whiſ-*

per is now *biſbigliare*, and was formerly *ciciſbeare*. And becauſe lovers and intimate friends are apt to whiſper, the diſpleaſure that whiſpering in company always gives, procured them the appellation of *ciciſbeo's*, that is, *whiſperers*. So much for the harmleſs etymology of the word, which we may eaſily conceive how, in proceſs of time, came to be indifferently beſtowed both upon lovers, and upon thoſe who, in all outward appearance, act as ſuch, attending on ladies with as much attention and reſpect as if they were their lovers.

The Italian cuſtom of almoſt every man attending on a lady with a lover's attention and reſpect, is then of a very old date, and not a late introduction into our manners, as Mr. Sharp inſinuates, when he ſays, that our women *were formerly immured*, and that *now they are under no kind of reſtraint*. A ſpirit of gallantry, derived from the ages of chivalry, much heightened and refined by

the revival of the Platonic philoſophy in Italy about the thirteenth century, and ſtill much cultivated in our univerſities, and in our numerous poetical academies, has been ſo long incorporated in our manners, that almoſt every polite individual, in the ſouthern parts of Italy eſpecially, is actuated by it in ſome degree. Witneſs the celebrated volume of Italian verſes by Francis Petrarca, whoſe amorous, and yet moſt chaſte Platonic ſentiments for the beautiful Laura, have rendered him the moſt favourite poet of Italy for theſe four laſt centuries; and witneſs the catalogue of his imitators, which would amount to many thouſands if it were exactly made; amongſt whom many famous names would be included, as thoſe of Angelo Poliziano, Lorenzo de Medici, Pietro Bembo, Monſignor Della Caſa, Jacopo Sannazzaro, Annibale Caro, Bernardo Taſſo, Torquato Taſſo, Euſtachio Manfredi, and a great many more both ancient and modern. Let us liſten to the

Arcadians of Rome, or let us read the collections publiſhed on almoſt every marriage of the great in Italy, and you will find them abounding with ſentiments of chaſte Platonic love. Almoſt all the polite Italians imbibe ſuch ſentiments as ſoon as they acquire the power of reading, and learn that *the contemplation of earthly beauty raiſes an honeſt mind to the contemplation and love of the heavenly*,

There is no need now to enter into the diſcuſſion whether theſe Platonic notions be true or falſe, ridiculous or reaſonable. It is ſufficient to our preſent purpoſe, that ſuch notions are very univerſal in Italy; that they are adopted and continually diſſeminated by the Italian poets, or by thoſe whom the Italians commonly call poets; and that they have been adopted and ſucceſſively diſſeminated through Italy, both in common ſpeech and in writing, both in proſe and verſe, for theſe four hundred years at leaſt. Open but the collection of our minor poets, chronologically

gically, compiled by Agoſtino Gobbi and his continuator, in ſix or ſeven octavo volumes, thickly printed, and you will find a long ſucceſſion of them, from the earlieſt beginning of our language to our very days, who have uninterruptedly rhimed to ſuch notions. Hence that reverential idea which almoſt every polite individual in Italy entertains of female beauty: hence that cuſtom, almoſt univerſal, of kiſſing in a moſt humble manner our ladies' hands when we enter their rooms: hence that other cuſtom, almoſt univerſal likewiſe, of our ſervants bearing the train of their miſtreſſes when they walk on foot: and hence the power that every polite woman has amongſt us, of commanding as many adorers as ſhe liſts, who love her with this kind of myſtic love, and never diſunite the idea of her beauty from that of her virtue. Thoſe adorers, from the vulgar that know little or nothing of all this Platonic ſtuff, (call it ſo, if you pleaſe) have got the appellation

tion of cicisbeo's, which appellation, however, though bordering upon the ludicrous, never implies the leaſt diſparaging reflection either upon them or the ladies; ſo that any body, without the leaſt fear of offending, may not only beſtow it on men, but on women likewiſe, and enquire after the conſtant attendant on a lady, or after a lady conſtantly attended, by the words of cicisbeo and cicisbea. *Che fa il voſtro cicisbeo, Signora? How does your adorer, Madam? Come ſiete in grazia della voſtra cicisbea? How are you in the good graces of your lady?* If ſuch appellations were any way offenſive, one may eaſily imagine, that the Italians would not have them as common in their mouths as the Engliſh have thoſe of *humble ſervant, friend, adorer*, and other ſuch in their familiar ſpeech.

By this account, which I could make ſtill more circumſtantial, were I not afraid of proving too tedious, it may be ſeen that Mr. Sharp knew nothing of the matter,

matter, when he ſet about his remark on our cicisbeo's, as he had not the key to our general cuſtoms and manners, which is, and never can be other, but a thorough knowledge of our language, and perfect acquaintance with our poetry. Not being able to comprehend, in the leaſt, our peculiar way of thinking, through his utter ignorance of what he ought not to have been ignorant, when he aſſumed the character of our cenſurer, he has not been able to account for what he ſaw or heard. Following therefore the lead of many other impertinent travellers who had preceded him in the tour of Italy, he fell upon us in a moſt brutal manner; reviled our huſbands for a pretended infamous acquieſcence in the general proſtitution of their wives; gave for indubitable that general proſtitution; and attributed to the Italians a downright ſyſtem of the moſt abominable immorality. Was any body to tranſlate his work into Italian, my countrymen would ſtrangely ſtare in reading

reading ſo much illiberal abuſe and ferocious declamations on them and their manners, and many of our ladies would certainly wiſh him for a while under the tuition of ſome good exorciſt.

There have been within theſe three centuries many ſuch accurate obſervers as Mr. Sharp, who have given accounts of Italy: but none of them have ever taken the leaſt notice of what I have here enlarged a little upon, except a Frenchman, of whom by and by; and Milton in his imperfect attempts to write Italian poetry, in which one may ſee, though confuſedly, that he had got a little glimmering of our peculiar notions about female beauty. Had he made any ſtay in Italy, and thoroughly maſtered the language, as he would have done in a little time, our Platonic conceits about love had certainly not eſcaped his ſagacity. As to the Frenchman, he is the anonymous author of a book intitled, *Memoires pour la Vie de François Petrarque, tirés de ſes Oeuvres et des Autears*

Auteurs Contemporains, and printed at Amſterdam ſo late as 1764, in two volumes, quarto.

It may be ſaid in commendation of the French, that they wrote a great deal about Italian language, Italian literature, Italian politics, and Italian cuſtoms and manners, from Henricus Stephanus, down to monſieur de Voltaire incluſively, and that not one of the many who handled theſe ſubjects, was ever ſo lucky as to be once right whether he blamed or praiſed. But the anonymous author of theſe *Memoires* has at laſt made us pretty good amends, as he has expatiated very much on the ſame topics, and yet is but ſeldom wrong. Having reſolved to write the life of Petrarch, and tranſlate his Italian poetry into French verſe, this author peruſed a vaſt number of our books, both Italian and Latin, not caring whether they were good or bad, and in general eſteem or ſunk into oblivion. By theſe means he made himſelf ſuch a maſter of

our

our manners and cuſtoms, that in my opinion no writer, either foreign or Italian, within the compaſs of my knowledge, knew better than him whatever has been relative to them for theſe four hundred years. Amongſt the peculiarities which diſtinguiſh our nation from others, that of the Platonic notions about love and beauty did not eſcape his obſervation; and endeavouring to clear his favourite author from the imputation of a lawleſs paſſion for his beautiful Laura, who was a married lady, he makes, amongſt others, the following very learned and very judicious remark.

" On le trouvera peutêtre encore moins " coupable, ſi on veut bien jetter un coup " d'oeil ſur les moeurs du ſiecle dans le " quel il vivoit. L'amour n'étoit pas " alors ce qu'il eſt à preſent un arrange- " ment de convenance, ou un commerce " de libertinage. C'etoit au contraire, une " paſſion honnête qu'on regardoit comme " le plus puiſſant mobile qui remua les

cœurs

" cœurs, et le plus capable de les porter
" à ces grandes actions de vertu et de cou-
" rage qui caracteriſent les grands hom-
" mes."

In Engliſh thus : " *Petrarch will be*
" *found ſtill leſs blamable, if we but caſt a*
" *glance on the manners of his age. Love*
" *was not then conſidered, as in our days,*
" *a mere matter of convenience, or a com-*
" *merce of libertiniſm. It was, on the con-*
" *trary, looked upon as a laudable paſſion,*
" *as a powerful mover of the heart, and as*
" *the greateſt inducement towards a diſplay*
" *of that courage and virtue which is neceſ-*
" *ſary to characteriſe heroes.*"

And a few lines after : " Les hommes
" depravés ne pourront pas croire que
" l'amour ait jamais eté un commerce pur
" de galanterie et de tendreſſe dont on
" n'ent point à rougir. Cependant rien
" de plus vrai. C'eſt ſous cette forme
" que nous le voyons repreſenté dans les
" ouvrages qui nous reſtent du ſiecle de
" Petrarque. Le cavalier le plus diſcret

avouoit

" avouoit en public la beauté à qu'il oſoit
" adreſſer ſes vœux et l'hommage de ſon
" cœur. Le poete le plus modeſte nom-
" moit dans ſes vers la nymphe qui lui
" ſervoit de muſe. La dame la plus hon-
" nête ne rougiſſoit pas d'etre l'objet d'une
" paſſion epurée, et d'y repondre publique-
" ment."

" *Depraved men will not eaſily be brought*
" *to believe, that love may be an innocent*
" *commerce of gallantry and reciprocal affec-*
" *tion, of which no one need to be aſhamed.*
" *Yet nothing is more true. It is under this*
" *form that we ſee love repreſented in the*
" *works ſtill extant of Petrarch's age. The*
" *diſcreeteſt cavalier owned publicly the lady*
" *whom he dared to love and honour. The*
" *moſt modeſt poet named in his verſes the*
" *fair who inſpired them; and the chaſteſt*
" *lady never bluſhed to be the object of a*
" *guiltleſs paſſion, nor ſcrupled to return it*
" *publicly.*"

Such were the Italian manners in Petrarch's time, and ſuch they have, in a great

great meaſure, continued to this day, if we will not ſtubbornly reject the authority of ſubſequent writers, and ſpurn the teſtimony of all our living rhymers and verſifiers.

I think it is the witty Voltaire who has ſaid, that the preſent Engliſh are quite different from thoſe of Cromwell's time. But this was ſaid in oſtentation of acuteneſs and gratification of malignity, as the modern Engliſh have ſtill the ſame temper that they had in the times of Cromwell. It is not in the power of a few ages to change utterly thoſe general cuſtoms that have been long ſettled, or ſubvert the univerſal manners of large nations. The Muſcovites are forced by a law to be very polite at Peterſburgh and Moſcow, where the gentlemen cut their beards, and the ladies paint. But travel through the inner parts of their empire, and you will find that the Muſcovites of to-day differ but little from thoſe that preceded Peter the Great. Thus the Italians are ſtill nearly

the ſame as thoſe that lived three or four centuries ago. The generality of them ſtill know very well how to keep love and vice aſunder; and though at bottom their paſſions be ſtill the ſame with the reſt of mankind, yet with them (to expreſs it after the above anonymous Frenchman) the heart and the ſenſes have different routes, and their objects are ſeldom the ſame. The Italians know how to make a difference between an ordinary woman and a polite lady, to whom they ſurrender their hearts. The one is a mere woman, who may remind them of the common calls of nature: but the other is a ſublime being; a divine ſovereign of the thoughts; an object of the greateſt reverence, never to be approached but as an angel clad in human form.

Had Mr. Sharp been acquainted with our language and poetry, theſe parts of our character, inſtead of exciting his reſentment, would only have made him ſmile: inſtead of running, in a moſt outrageous

rageous manner, againſt our cicisbeo's, who in civil language we call *cavaliere's*, and againſt our cicisbea's, whom we term *dame's*, he would only have had the pleaſure of diſplaying his wit, and would have made his countrymen laugh, not at the deformity of our vices, but at the childiſhneſs of our conceits. And yet this had not totally debarred him from falling very ſarcaſtically upon many of them, who, forgetful of their anceſtors' ways, and their methods of adoring the fair, carry on the moſt lawleſs paſſions under the deceitful veil of guiltleſs friendſhip; ſheltering themſelves under the ſhade of Platonic bowers, which ought to be for ever ſacred to innocence and purity.

But while I am honeſtly telling Mr. Sharp all I know of this part of our conduct, of which I certainly muſt know more than he, having myſelf been, in my bright days, both a cicisbeo and an humble imitator of Petrarch's poetry; and while I ſet open a new door for him to ruſh

forth and diſcharge his ſpleen at the immorality of the higher order amongſt us; let him ſtill keep in mind, that the failings of an inconſiderable number of individuals are never to be conſidered as national corruption; and that a ſmall helliſh gang of Engliſhmen, who once cut off the head of one of their ſovereigns, conferred no right upon foreigners to call the collective body of this loyal nation a ſet of fanatical regicides.

CHAP. IX.

AFTER the two heavy charges of *murder* and *adultery*, Mr. Sharp loads the Italians with that of *ſuperſtition*. It is ſtrange to hear him, in the heighth of his wiſdom, revile them for keeping *a great many feſtival days throughout the year*, and how deſperately angry he is with the innumerable *rareeſhows* exhibited every where

where throughout their towns, villages, and hamlets without exception.

To underſtand well what Mr. Sharp means by his pretty word *rareeſhows*, I muſt give my curious reader a ſhort ſketch of our cuſtoms, of which Mr. Sharp has declined to give an account.

Know then, that on Sundays, and other holidays, of which we have a good many, in almoſt all places where there is any church adjoining to a cluſter of houſes, our prieſts are uſed, both in the morning after the great maſs, and in the afternoon after the veſpers, to dreſs themſelves *in pontificalibus*, and make a proceſſion.

This proceſſion is formed by little leſs than all the inhabitants in the neighbourhood. The good creatures, as ſoon as they ſee the prieſts ready, quickly join in pairs, men with men, women with women, and children with children. The croſs precedes, and the prieſts follow them; and the proceſſion is cloſed by a wooden crucifix, a Madona, or ſome tutelary

ſaint placed on a large and heavy ſcaffold, and born by ſome of the moſt luſty of the company, who are always willing to ſweat under the enormous weight, having a notion that the carrying it about does a deal of good to their ſouls. The prieſts generally have lighted torches in their right hand, and thoſe of the people who can afford it, have wax-candles. As ſoon as the image is lifted up from one ſide of the church, where it is placed on holidays, the prieſts, with the moſt ſonorous voice they can fetch, begin to ſing a pſalm, or the litanies, or ſome other thing, in Latin; and the people that form the proceſſion, knowing thoſe things by heart, though none of them underſtand a word of Latin, anſwer by turns to the ſinging of the prieſts. In this order, and with this noiſe, formed by a good many diſcordant voices, the proceſſion makes a large tour, and then returns to the church. There the *rareſhow* ends with a benediction given by the curate, or ſome other

prieſt

prieſt of the pariſh; after which, if the evening be not rainy, the old and the young divide. The old go and ſit down to chat among themſelves; and the young run as faſt as they can to ſome known place, where a dance is preſently ſet a going, as the fiddlers always take care to be there beforehand. There they caper away till they are tired, and generally till it is time to go and get a bit of bread and cheeſe by way of ſupper.

Theſe proceſſions are the very capital *rareeſhows* exhibited through Italy, and moſt particularly in little towns and villages; and againſt theſe many proteſtant travellers have vented a good deal of religious ſpleen. They are all, as well as Mr. Sharp, very angry at ſuch *rareeſhows*; and all firmly of opinion, that all proceſſions are very fooliſh, very abſurd, very idolatrous, very impolitic, and every way ridiculous and detrimental. Their arguments againſt theſe are indeed ſo ſtrong, as always to have puzzled my

logic whenever I attempted to prove them harmleſs; and always forced me to think, that inſtead of going about in proceſſion on holidays, our people would do much better to get into inns or brandy-ſhops, and there get moſt glorioufly drunk, and ſwear, and quarrel, and talk politics or religion; or elſe pick up ſome chance-girl, and ſo fit themſelves for a few months retirement in ſome ſuch place as the Lock-hoſpital.

However, as ſomething may always be ſaid pro and con in every conteſt, I have a mind to diſcuſs a little this affair of our *rareeſhows*, and offer Mr. Sharp a few reaſons in their favour, when conſidered, not in a religious, but in a political light.

Yet before I launch into this difficult diſquiſition, I muſt put him in mind of two things: the firſt is, that the Italians in general are at leaſt as robuſt a race of mortals as any in Europe; and the ſecond is, conſidering the extent of Great Britain

and

and that of Italy, that the Italian is a much more numerous nation than the Britiſh.

There are a great number of very wiſe mortals in this metropolis of England, who taking up their notions from the Farinello's and Guarducci's they heard melodiouſly warbling in the Haymarket, are ready at all times to aſſert, that the Italians are in general a very puny people, becauſe the heat of the climate makes them perſpire their vigour away. And it is not long ſince a moſt grave man, who is both a phyſician and a knight, reminded me of the effeminacy of Capua, which was the deſtruction of the great Hannibal and his valiant ſoldiers; and yet thoſe ſame ſoldiers were born and bred in the warmeſt climates of Africa.

In ſpite however of theſe very wiſe mortals, I take it for granted that Mr. Sharp will not much conteſt with me the firſt of theſe two points. He has obſerved, that in Venice *men are remarkably tall*; and tallneſs generally implies ſtrength and vigour

vigour of limbs. *Look at any claſs amongſt them*, ſays he, *and you will find a very few ſhort men amongſt them.* He has obſerved likewiſe at Naples, that the men *ſeemed in his eyes more robuſt and athletic than the run of mankind in London.* Theſe two obſervations are almoſt the only ones on this ſubject, that eſcaped from his pen in ſome unguarded moment; and I wonder how he could ſuffer them to eſcape, conſidering his invincible reluctance to grant any advantage, though ever ſo ſmall, to the Italians, when he brings them in competition with the Engliſh. However he ſaid as much of the Venetians and the Neapolitans, adding even, that *the Neapolitan porters will carry ſtill greater burdens than the Engliſh porters.* As to the reſt of the Italians he has been ſilent, and neither ſpoke of their labourers, nor of their ſoldiers, nor of any of thoſe other claſſes of people, whoſe trades require ſtrength of body. But as he did not tax them any where in his book with feeble-

neſs

neſs and effeminacy, I take it for granted that he was aſhamed to ſtrengthen the falſely received opinion, that the Italians are a womaniſh race of people, only fit for fiddling and ſinging, becauſe they are born under too warm a ſun.

Mr. Sharp may perhaps be willing to conteſt the ſecond point, and deny the ſuperiority of populouſneſs of Italy, when compared to that of Great Britain, as he muſt be ſenſible that he has woefully deplored the unpopulouſneſs of many ſpots there, which in the days of old Rome ſwarmed with numberleſs human creatures; and to give a ponderoſity to his arguments, he may perhaps quote the reſpectible authority of biſhop Burnet, who, though a native of Scotland, ſaid *It is amazing to ſee the deſolation of Italy, and how miſerably it is unpeopled.*

Nevertheleſs, in ſpite of the deſolation and depopulation obſerved by the biſhop throughout Italy, and by Mr. Sharp in a few parts only of the papal and Neapolitan

litan dominions; let Mr. Sharp firſt conſider, that the whole ſuperficies of Italy is not larger than the ſuperficies of Great Britain; and then let him remember that he has given us *a liſt*, which he had reaſon to believe authentic, *of the inhabitants of Tuſcany*, who according to that liſt (excluſive of the ſtate of Lucca) amount to *nine hundred and forty odd thouſand*, though Tuſcany be ſcarcely the twelfth part of Italy, and though it be, for the greateſt part, mountainous, and conſequently thinly peopled when compared to Piedmont, Lombardy, and many other flat provinces in ſeveral parts of our peninſula. Then let him recollect the populouſneſs of the whole Italian coaſt for about ſixteen hundred miles, and remember in particular that ſtreak of habitations on the border of the Ligurian ſea, from Nice to Genoa, which part of our coaſt is one hundred and twenty miles in length; and yet looks like one continued town through all that ſpace, containing

ten or eleven towns, and about three-ſcore villages, beſides a vaſt many cluſters of houſes between thoſe towns and villages. Let him recollect what numberleſs habitations, ſcarcely interrupted by empty ſpaces, are on either ſide of the vallies of Ponſevera and Biſagno, which reach from Genoa to the foot of the Bocchetta, for about twenty miles. Let him recollect how thick are the towns and villages throughout the king of Sardinia's dominions, and in Piedmont eſpecially, which, though a large province, looks almoſt like one ſingle city. Let him recollect what a number of towns, villages, and houſes may be ſeen from Turin to Milan, and from Milan to Venice: how numerous are the people of Chivaſſo, Creſcentino, Trino, Caſale, Vercelli, Novara, Bufalora and Magenta; and then thoſe of Lodi, Cremona, Pizzghitone, Gera d'Adda, Bozzolo, Mantova, Bergamo, Breſcia, Verona, Vicenza, and Padua, all lying almoſt in a line of little

more

more than two hundred and thirty miles, with a great many conſiderable villages and little towns interſperſed. Then let him recollect, in the pope's dominions only, that row of towns from Bologna to Macerata; that is, Bologna, Imola, Faenza, Forli, Forlimpopoli, Ceſena, Saviniano, Rimini, Cattolica, Peſaro, Fano, Sinigaglia, Ancona, Camerano, Loretto, Recanati, and Macerata, which are all in a line of little more than a hundred and fifty miles, and all ſurrounded with populous territories. Let him then turn back towards Lombardy, and look on the numberleſs towns and villages ſcattered all about the Monte di Brianza, juſt under the mountains of Switzerland, perhaps the moſt populous and the moſt delightful province in all Italy, and yet very ſeldom viſited by Engliſh travellers. Let him then conſider the ſmall, but thickly inhabited, ſtates of Lucca, Parma, and Modena, and the infinite number, ſcarcely known to the world, who live on the

long

long range of the Apennines, for the ſpace of about ſix hundred miles; among which there is a ſmall nation never mentioned by any Engliſh traveller, betwixt Verona and the Alps beyond Roveredo, where a language is ſpoke of unknown origin; which nation is ſuppoſed by the marquis Maffei, in his *Verona Illuſtrata*, to be deſcended from the Cimbri, defeated by Marius. Then let Mr. Sharp give me leave to inform him, that I have been aſſured by his friend, the late Engliſh reſident in Venice, that the Venetians have more than two millions and a half of ſubjects in Italy only, though the Venetians amongſt the Italian ſovereigns hold but the fourth rank. Add to all this, the king of Naples' dominions, which take up near one third of Italy, excluſive of Sicily. From this account let Mr. Sharp, if he can, ſtrike out a calculation, approaching to exactneſs, and he will find, that it would be ridiculous to compare the numbers contained in Great Britain with thoſe

of Italy; where, upon a moderate computation, and excluſive of its three great iſlands, (Sicily, Sardinia, and Corſica) there are very near fourteen millions of people; when in all Great Britain, that is, in England, Wales, and Scotland, it is ſaid, that there are little more than ſeven millions *.

* Many Italians pretend that Italy contains more than ſixteen millions of people. However the following is an account of its inhabitants, as far as my beſt enquiries could go:

The king of Naples, excluſive of Sicily,	3,800,000
The pope, - - - - - - - - -	1,350,000
The grand duke of Tuſcany, according to Mr. Sharp's liſt, leaving out the odd numbers, - - - - - - - - -	940,000
The republic of Lucca, - - - - -	140,000
The duke of Modena, - - - - -	330,000
The duke of Parma, - - - - - -	330,000
The Venetians, - - - - - - - -	2,600,000
State of Milan, - - - - - - - -	1,060,000
State of Mantua, - - - - - - - -	170,000
	10,720,000

The

Having ſtated theſe two points, I will now ſay ſomething of the *ſuperſtition* of the Italians, and of their *feſtival-days* and *rareeſhows*, which include not only their frequent proceſſions, but their high and low maſſes; the great ornaments beſtowed on their churches; their ceremonies at chriſtmas, in the holy week, at eaſter, and on many other occaſions; the various and rich accoutrements of their prieſts, of all ranks, from the pope down to the curate, when on their duty; and numberleſs other things of this kind, which

Brought over	10,720,000
† The king of Sardinia, excluſive of Sardinia and Savoy, - - - - -	2,700,000
The republic of Genoa, excluſive of Corſica, - - - - - - - - -	470,000
	13,890,000

† *In* 1729, *Keyſler reckoned two millions only, excluſive of Sardinia: but it muſt now be conſidered, that ſince Keyſler's time, a large tract of Lombardy, and a large part of Montferrat, have been added to that king's dominions. Then agriculture, and eſpecially the planting of mulberry trees, has been greatly encouraged within theſe forty years, which has encreaſed its populouſneſs conſiderably.*

render religion grand and magnificent in its outward appearance, eſpecially in the raviſhed ſight of our common people, who are thoſe that moſt want to be impreſſed with awful ideas.

With theſe rareeſhows, which are certainly ſuperſtitious in a great meaſure, the Italians have been reproached ever ſince the great ſchiſm that took place in the Chriſtian religion about the time of Henry VIII. This reproach has been handed down to us from one proteſtant traveller to another; and they have all expatiated, if not with great wiſdom, at leaſt with great aſperity and mockery, on the folly of thoſe Italian politics, which allow of ſuch enormous intervals and means of diſſipation. Nor has any of theſe all-knowing politicians ever ſeemed to entertain the leaſt ſuſpicion, that there can be arguments produced in favour of theſe feſtivals and rareeſhows, and ſuch arguments too, as will overbalance theirs, at leaſt with regard to ſuch practices which

are

are certainly derived from thoſe of the Romans, who, like the modern Italians, were very ſuperſtitious, and as fond of feſtivals and rareeſhows as their ſucceſſors of to-day. But dunces feel ſo rapturous a joy when they can make a parade of their ſurpriſing quickneſs in finding out glaring abſurdities among their neighbours, that it is no wonder if they are always ready to repreſent their cuſtoms and manners in a ridiculous light. You may tell dunces, that general cuſtoms form themſelves by imperceptible degrees, and that, when they are formed, it is not only extremely difficult to alter them, but extremely dangerous even to attempt it. They will ſtill go on with mockery upon mockery, and with declamation upon declamation; and every new attempt to bring them to reaſon is but a renovation of their abſurdity.

However, to give Mr. Sharp ſome ſmall notion of Italian politics relative to *rareeſhows*, he muſt permit me to inform him, that

the late Pope Benedict XIV. once offered all the Italian princes an utter abolition of all holidays, Sundays excepted; which offer procured him the appellation of *Papa proteſtante, the proteſtant Pope.*

Had that abolition taken place, it would certainly have demoliſhed a large portion of thoſe ſuperſtitious rareſhows ſo nauſeated by proteſtants in general, and by Mr. Sharp in particular. But, after long debates and conſultations, every one of thoſe princes rejected his holineſs' offer, and choſe rather to go on in the old way.

The reaſons urged for accepting the offered abolition may eaſily be gueſſed by any ſhop-keeper in England, let him be ever ſo dull. We have lately got in Italy a pretty numerous ſet of young gentlemen, who can talk as glibly about political matters as any old member of the Robinhood ſociety, and deſcant, with as much elquence and perſpicuity, upon arts, manufactures, and commerce, as any Britiſh grocer or haberdaſher

haberdaſher of them all. Our young men of quality not only read Voltaire, Rouſſeau, the marquis d'Argens, Monteſquiou, and other modiſh French writers, but likewiſe many Engliſh books tranſlated into Italian from the French. By means of ſuch ſtudies, it is inconceivable how our young men of quality encreaſe in wiſdom and ſcepticiſm every day.

Counſellors of this caſt, we may well ſuppoſe, when the great queſtion concerning the offered abolition was agitated, launched out, with great force of ratiocination, upon "the prodigious advantages "that would infallibly accrue to arts, "manufactures and commerce, by ex- "ploding thoſe uſeleſs and noxious feſti- "vals; upon the large additions which "might be made to the preſent ſtock in "trade, by the united labours of ſeveral "millions of hands in the ſpace of forty "or fifty days gained by the abolition "every year; and on the ſtrong probability of underſelling our neighbours

" at foreign markets in a very ſhort time,
" which would quickly make us maſters
" of the whole commerce of the coun-
" tries round, give us numerous fleets in
" a few years, and render the Italian
" name reſpectable once more to the
" whole world."

After having opened this enchanting proſpect, we may likewiſe eaſily conceive, that thoſe young counſellors pointed out with great acuteneſs of obſervation, " the " innumerable evils produced by idleneſs, " the great parent of vice; and enlarged " moſt pompouſly on the inexpreſſible " happineſs which a nation enjoys, whoſe " poor are ſo induſtriouſly inclined as to " employ every moment of their time in " inceſſant labour."

Theſe, and other ſuch aſtoniſhing arguments were probably confirmed by the example of the Engliſh in particular, " who by their unparalleled induſtry and " natural love of labour, are all become " very rich and very happy, the greateſt

" part

" part of them being lords and ſquires,
" who not knowing what to do with
" their bags of money, run in ſhoals
" about the world to ſcatter it away, and
" eſpecially about Italy, where, amongſt
" other ſatisfactions, they obtain that of
" hearing ſongs, ſung in the trueſt taſte,
" and of contemplating the moſſy ruins
" of ancient Rome, together with the
" half-defaced works of Michelangelo
" and Raphael."

But now, Mr. Sharp, let us turn the leaf, and ſee what is contained in the next page; that is, let us hear the anſwer given to thoſe learned and wiſe counſellors by an old-faſhioned ſtaunch Machivelian, and his reaſons againſt accepting the offered abolition.

The fellow began his ſpeech with this old, very old obſervation, that " *the plu-*
" *rality muſt needs be ever poor, let their*
" *induſtry be ever ſo great, and their labour*
" *ever ſo inceſſant.*" He then went on in this ſtrain:

" If this be true, as it is without
" doubt, that labour is the greateſt mur-
" derer of men, as it appears by the
" ſhort ſpace that the labourious part of
" mankind live, when compared to the
" long time lived by the idle, why ſhould
" we be ſo uncharitable as to ſhorten the
" lives of our countrymen with an incre-
" ment of fatigue? What is there in
" the world that deſerves the getting, if
" it muſt be got at ſo dear an expence?
" Pray, gentlemen, what do we want
" farther than what we have? Does not
" Italy, one year with another, produce
" corn for us all? It certainly does, ſince
" we ſend many ſhip-loads of it to Spain
" and Turkey when the crop proves
" tolerable, beſides furniſhing Switzer-
" land with almoſt all the bread that is
" eaten there? Then Italy produces a
" great deal more wine than we could
" poſſibly drink, if we were all turned into
" ſponges. We have cattle enough to
" furniſh the whole peninſula with meat:

" we

" we have horſes, aſſes, and mules in
" abundance; the whole land ſwarms
" with fowls, both wild and tame; and
" the ſea, which encompaſſes us on three
" ſides, and our rivers and lakes, are
" very liberal to us of very good fiſh.
" As for cheeſe, we have ſuch quantities,
" and ſo good, that all the nations of
" Europe will taſte of it, as likewiſe of
" our Bologna-ſauſages, and macaroni's,
" and vermicelli's, and other ſuch good
" things. Then we have very luſcious
" grapes, and melons, and apples, and
" pears, and figs, and plums, and oranges,
" and lemons, and all other ſorts of
" fruits in an aſtoniſhing abundance. Our
" gardens give us cabbages, and ſallad,
" and all kinds of pot-herbs twenty
" times more than we need. You all
" know what prodigious quantities of oil
" we ſend abroad, beſides what we uſe
" at home: you all know what plenty of
" good rice ſome of our provinces yield,
" and turkey-corn, and cheſnuts, which

" make

" make up the chief food of our low
" people. You know what quantities
" of beans and peas, and other kinds of
" pulſe, we may conſume of our own
" growth. Our mountains yield near as
" much iron and copper as we want, be-
" ſides ſo much fine marble of all ſorts,
" both for uſe and ornament, that we
" might build new cities, if we thought
" it neceſſary. We have no need of buy-
" ing any kind of timber from abroad, as
" we have oaks, and elms, and fir-trees,
" and walnut-trees, more than our car-
" penters will ever want, beſides black
" and red ebony, and many other fine
" woods for cabinet-making. We have
" fewel for firing, flax to make linen,
" and hemp enough to hang us all, if we
" had a mind to it. We have wool
" enough to cloath all the lower part of
" our people, and hides and ſkins enough
" for our ſhoes and gloves; and a thou-
" ſand other bleſſings, for which we
" ought to be thankful; and above all

" the nations in the world, except per-
" haps the Chineſe, we have an immenſe
" quantity of ſilk, which our ground
" produces every where. This article
" alone, good Sirs, is more than equi-
" valent to all the ſuperfluities which
" our preſent general luxury and corrup-
" tion makes us dream we want from
" other countries. Our ſilk alone will
" procure us coffee from Arabia, ſugar
" from Martinico, pepper, cinnamon,
" cloves, and nutmegs from the Eaſt-
" Indies; pilchards, herrings, and ſalmon
" from Falmouth, Yarmouth, and Car-
" rickfergus; and as much gold and ſilver
" from Peru and Potoſi as will facilitate
" all kinds of mercantile buſineſs among
" us; and yet the balance of trade be
" ſtill in our favour. We have already
" ſo much tobacco of our own growth,
" that if we improve a little farther the
" cultivation of it, we ſhall in a little
" time want no more either from Vir-
" ginia

" g nia or from Salonicchio. What then,
" in the name of confuſion, do theſe
" gentlemen want more? What need
" have we to encreaſe our natural riches
" with papal abolitions? Are we not a
" nation numerous enough, and as ſtrong
" and as healthy as any other nation?
" And what do theſe beardleſs gentry
" talk about the Engliſh, and bring their
" example to ſupport their ultramontane
" reaſoning? The Engliſh, we allow,
" are a very ingenious and induſtrious
" people, as we ſee by their cloaths, their
" watches, and their Birmingham-wares.
" They are a people that hate idleneſs as
" much as they hate the French and
" the Devil. But is it poſitively true,
" that they are all lords and ſquires,
" becauſe they hate idleneſs and love
" hard work? Yet, ſuppoſe this was
" true, what would it ſignify? What
" buſineſs have we to make lords and
" ſquires of all our poor? Is it not bet-
" ter for them to live a long life in idle-
neſs,

" neſs, than to be for a few years labour-
" ing lords, and hard-working ſquires?
" Then our idle poor propagate much
" faſter than the laborious Engliſh, if it
" be true, that the country of the Eng-
" liſh, though ſomewhat larger than
" ours, ſcarcely contains half as many
" inhabitants; and you all know, gentle-
" men, that propagation has been the
" chief end of our creation. But alas,
" gentlemen! let us ſaddle an additional
" weight of labour on our poor, and de-
" prive them at the ſame time of their
" rejoicing feſtivals and rareeſhows, what
" will be the conſequence? The conſe-
" quence will be, that they will work
" their own deſtruction. It is true, that
" our ſtock in trade will certainly grow
" a little larger, for a while, after the
" abolition, and bring perhaps ſome few
" cart-loads of money into our country
" from foreign parts. But then the
" cheapneſs of money will cauſe dearneſs
" of proviſions, and encreaſe much the

" price

" price of all the neceſſaries of life: and
" then our poor will be poor indeed, as
" it is certain they have as good backs as
" any poor in Chriſtendom to undergo
" labour; but have, on the other hand,
" no more wit than the other poor in
" Chriſtendom to make their profit of
" their labour, and get their ſhare of
" the aforeſaid cart-loads of money. Skil-
" ful computers, who are ſeldom of their
" claſs, will get all that money to them-
" ſelves; and a few will have plums and
" large eſtates, while thouſands ſhall be
" obliged to labour, pine, and ſtarve.
" Then dearneſs of proviſions and other
" neceſſaries will often make them angry,
" and upon the leaſt ground of complaint
" they will aſſemble riotouſly, and burn
" and deſtroy granaries and mills, and
" throw corn and cheeſe into ponds and
" rivers to make them cheap; and ſedi-
" tiouſly ſurround the dwellings of our
" nobility and chief people, whom they
" ſhall dream to be the authors of their
" wants;

" wants; and create great confuſion in
" all parts of the country; and thus we
" ſhall bring upon us ſuch evils and cala-
" mities as we are ſtill total ſtrangers
" to. Let us therefore ſuffer the good
" creatures to live on as they have done
" theſe many ages; let them gape with
" wonted ſuperſtition on their wooden
" ſaints and paſte-board Madona's; let
" them enjoy their feſtivals and raree-
" ſhows; and a fig for theſe outlandiſh
" politics imported in French books, that
" turn the heads of all our reading youth,
" and never will do Italy any good!"

Now, Mr. Samuel Sharp the politician, what reply would you have made to this ſpeech of our Machiavelian? Did you not ſay, that the gondoliers of Venice are better fed and better dreſſed than your boatmen on the Thames? that the low people at Naples look as athletically as Milo in times of yore? that the beggars of Tuſcany are better clad and more cleanly lodged than your beggars through Middle-

ſex

ſex and Surry? You certainly ſaid or hinted ſomething in your book to this purpoſe; and heaven knows what you would have ſaid if you had ever entered the chearful and hoſpitable habitations of the Lombard, the Piedmonteſe, and the Genoeſe peaſantry! Will you now ſtill ſay, Sir, that their feſtivals and rareeſhows are totally impolitic as well as ſuperſtitious, and that the princes of Italy were not ſo wiſe as your worſhip; becauſe they did not accept of the abolition as you would have done?

Theſe feſtivals and rareeſhows, Mr. Sharp, are ſuperſtitious, I grant it over and over; and the vulgar of Italy are very credulous when they believe, that their ſalvation partly depends on their devotion to thoſe feſtivals and rareeſhows. But while you upraid your neighbours for their ſuperſtition and credulity, do not forget your friends at home, and obſerve, that abſurdities are not all on the other ſide of the water. Remember, Sir, that

in

in your days and mine ſome of your countrymen were tried, and one of them fairly hanged, for having drowned a poor old woman, becauſe ſhe was a witch. This ſingle fact ought to perſuade you, that the low part of mankind are naturally ſuperſtitious and credulous every where. And we men of bright underſtandings may eaſily rail at credulity and ſuperſtition; but to root them out of the world is beyond the power of our wit; and I know ſome people, who would not think it very advantageous neither, if it was even poſſible. Changes are not made without inconvenience, even from worſe to better, as one of your beſt divines has obſerved: and the aboliſhing of feſtivals and rareeſhows in Italy would in all likelihood prove juſt as eaſy as to hinder the Engliſh freeholders from ſelling their votes at elections. Mr. Sharp may ſcoff as long as he pleaſes at the ſuperſtition and credulity of the Italians: he is very welcome; but he muſt not forget, that cre-

dulity and ſuperſtition are no vices: that it is no crime to run and ſee a man in a bottle in the Haymarket, or a ghoſt in Cock-lane: to buy dying-ſpeeches of people who died without uttering a word: to be dupes of News-paper-quacks, and Grub-ſtreet politicians: to be averſe to ſit thirteen at table: to croud Whitfield and Weſley's tabernacles, and be methodiſts, quakers, or anabaptiſts: to eat croſs buns at Eaſter, and ſlaughter turkies at Chriſtmas: to wonder at the French, that can live upon frogs and ſoop, and be ſure of the exiſtence of giants in Patagonia.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

I Think it already proved to the reader's ſatisfaction, that Mr. Sharp underſtands not a word of Italian. Were any farther evidence neceſſary, I would inſtance his childiſh remarks on our theatres, on which he has beſtowed five full letters, and his profound ſilence about the preſent ſtate of our literature.

Of our theatrical abilities, as poets, he ſays nothing. He only deſcribes the extent of our ſtages; the width of the boxes; their price and diſpoſition; the gaudineſs of the ſcenery,; its illumination, or no-illumination; the ſalary of the ſingers; the length of the dances; the inattention of the audience, and other ſuch miſerable trifles, which prove not only tedious, but erroneous for the greateſt

part. He ſays, for inſtance, in one line, that the *opera-performers are not paid ſo liberally at Naples as at London*; and in the next line, that Gabrieli *had, for one year only, nine hundred Engliſh pounds.* Would then Gabrieli be more liberally paid if ſhe was engaged for the Haymarket? There ſhe would ſcarcely be paid more than a thouſand pounds, and be at the expence of coming and going, beſides the greater expence that ſhe would be put to for living, which is, at leaſt, thrice dearer in London than in Naples. Mr. Sharp ſeems firmly perſuaded, that the Italian muſicians get vaſt heaps of guineas here, and buy large eſtates with Engliſh money when they go back to their homes: but let him, if he can, name more than one Italian ſinger who ever grew rich in England ſince Seneſino. I have ſeen for ten years the operas in the Haymarket carried on to the great ſatisfaction of the Engliſh muſical ladies; but I have likewiſe ſeen almoſt all the chief

chief Italian performers there return home very poor, or with very ſmall ſavings in their pockets, in ſpight of their *enormous ſalaries*, and *prodigious benefits*. Viſconti, Serafino, Mattei, and one or two more, carried away, it may be, four or five hundred pounds each, one with another; but Mingotti, Potenza, Cornacchini, Ricciarelli, and many more went away moneyleſs; as they choſe to ſubmit to an unjuſt abatement in their ſalaries, rather than truſt twice to thoſe jurymen, who made ſtrange mouths on hearing that people were paid *a thouſand pounds for a ſong*. Then the ſingers of leſs note are ſo poorly paid, conſidering the dearneſs of every thing in London, that they ſtruggle under great difficulties all the time they ſtay here; get themſelves into jail pretty often for debt; and at laſt return home as poor as they came.

As to the fiddlers and other Italians, who come here to play or to teach muſic, fooliſhly attracted by the great renown of

Engliſh riches, they perform at the Opera and at Madam Cornely's, and trot about from houſe to houſe every morning, to give leſſons for two guineas a dozen, while the winter laſts: but ſcarcely one in twenty has found himſelf twenty pounds the better at the year's end for theſe twenty years paſt.

I will not expatiate farther on this low ſubject, of which, low as it is, Mr. Sharp knows but very little, notwithſtanding his pretty compariſon between Chabran and Giardini, and his encomiums on the two *Biſouci's*, as he calls them; or *Beſozzi*, as he ought to have called them.

Inſtead of being ſo diffuſe as he is on theſe trifles, Mr. Sharp would have done much better to have given us ſome critical ſynopſis or analyſis of ſome of the comedies, tragedies, farces, or operas, which he pretends to have ſeen in ſeveral of our towns, to enable us to compare them with the works of the ſame kind written in the Engliſh language. But inſtead of doing

doing any thing of this ſort, he touches, and does but touch, upon our Harlequins and Don Faſtidio's, and takes not the leaſt notice of our *extempore-comedies*; a ſingularity ſtriking enough for any ſtranger to note amongſt the moſt peculiar characteriſtics of the Italian theatre. What delight can an Engliſh reader find in hearing Mr. Sharp talk of the white or black drawers worn by the Italian dancers on the ſtage; of lemonades drank in the boxes by Italian ladies; or of the alternate loſs and gain made by Italian managers? What do we care whether induſtry or *mere accident threw theſe particulars in his way?*

Had Mr. Sharp been able to conſtrue ever ſo little of our language, he would, in all likelihood, have touched upon the merits of our poets and men of learning; and would have ſaid ſomething, good or bad, right or wrong, of the great number of books continually publiſhed in many of our towns. Was this a topic to be over-

looked by ſuch a ſkilful cenſurer? By a man who has reſided about a year amongſt us, without having any thing to do? By a man, who has been an author himſelf before he went his journey, and did intend ſtill to keep that character on his return? This was a topic not to be paſt unnoticed by Mr. Sharp, who betrays a ſtrong deſire to be ranked amongſt the modiſh writers of the age in the very firſt pages of his work, giving a minute detail of his memorable viſit (juſt as he was going to enter Italy) to the famous monſieur de Voltaire, and pluming himſelf on his early acquaintance with that extraordinary genius.

On ſeeing Mr. Sharp enter upon the deſcription of his Italian ramble, with a lively ſtricture on that Frenchman's opinions and works, I certainly expected he would not have miſſed the opportunity of gratifying the curioſity of his learned countrymen, by telling them ſomething worthy notice of the learning of Italy: but

but I was ſoon aware I ſhould be diſappointed. Yet perhaps he has done better to omit this fruitful ſubject, as the little he tells us of Voltaire is ſo jejune, ſo trifling, ſo unintereſting, and ſo erroneous, that it makes us the leſs regret ſo great an omiſſion.

I wiſh, for the honour of my country, ſays Mr. Sharp moſt patriotically, *that a Frenchman could taſte the language of Shakeſpear.* Ay! ſo would every Engliſhman that the Mogul himſelf could; and ſo would all men in all countries be pleaſed, if foreigners could taſte the language of their beſt poets. As far as ſuch a wiſh can go, every ſenſible native of any country is a very laudable patriot. Every Frenchman would be glad to ſee even the inhabitants of the moon taſte thoſe dramatic performances which fill his heart with pity, or convulſe his face with laughter; and every Italian would be ſupremely rejoiced to ſee the whole univerſe delighted by Pulci, animated by Arioſto,

and

and melted by Metaſtaſio. But theſe are idle wiſhes, that never will be gratified. Too large a part of a man's life muſt neceſſarily be ſpent in acquiring that infinite aſſociation of ideas, which is indiſpenſibly required to taſte, as a native, the language of any foreign poet. Few men enjoy leiſure enough for ſo difficult an acquiſition: and it is owing to the want of this leiſure, as well as to their arrogance and ſelf-conceit, that ſo many critics of all nations blunder at every word, whenever they ſit in judgment on this and that foreign poet. I am preſumptuous enough to think myſelf a tolerable maſter of the Engliſh; but I am likewiſe humble enough to abſtain from pronouncing, that many paſſages in Milton and Shakeſpeare are not ſtriking, becauſe they do not ſtrike me when I read them: and this my reſerve and timidity ariſes from an obſervation I have had many times occaſion to make, that many of thoſe paſſages which did not ſtrike me when I read them myſelf, have

ſtruck

ſtruck me very forcibly when I heard them read by thoſe who knew how they are to be read.

Mr. Sharp is then quite out of the way when he ſays, that Voltaire has preſented his countrymen with ſome ſpecimens of Shakeſpeare's works, *with a view to make them admire the manner of writing of that poet.* Had Mr. Sharp read or underſtood Voltaire's works, he would certainly have given another account of Voltaire's *real views*, when he gave thoſe ſpecimens. Voltaire, on one ſide, never knew Engliſh enough to conſtrue a page of ſimple proſe; and is actuated, on the other hand, by a vanity bordering upon phrenzy, to appear poſſeſſed of all the modern polite languages: to ſhew his ſkill in Engliſh, he he has given the world ſome random criticiſms on a few Britiſh poets, Dryden and Shakeſpeare eſpecially. Of Dryden's poetical works he approves *a tenth part only*, without ſpecifying the *one* that he approves, and the *nine* he diſapproves. An

ingenuous

and ſatisfactory judgment! On Shakeſpeare he has beſtowed, here and there, a few meagre praiſes when he was in England. But as ſoon as he was gone, he changed his tone, and made repeated endeavours to render him ridiculous. Let us but read his tranſlation of Hamlet *, and we ſhall be convinced, that this was *his only view*, and that the Engliſh, in his opinion, are intirely without taſte and judgment in their extravagant admiration of this favourite poet.

It may be true, that Voltaire, in his converſation with Mr. Sharp, called the French tranſlation of the Spectator *dull writing*. I will not bring in queſtion Mr. Sharp's recollection of Voltaire's words, and much leſs Mr. Sharp's veracity in this particular. But as I could ſpeak French from my infancy, I will venture to tell him, that the French tranſlation

* *See* Les ouvrages poſthumes de Guillaume Vadé.

of

of the Spectator is very faithful, as to the ſenſe, and very elegant, as to the language. It is true, that the French read it not with that reliſh, with which the Engliſh read the original; and the reaſon is plain. The Spectator's papers are, in a great meaſure, local: therefore cannot equally intereſt foreign readers. The French tranſlator, well aware of this, has even omitted ſome of thoſe papers which were applicable to the Engliſh manners only. Were the Spectator tranſlated ever ſo well into Arabic, it would pleaſe the Arabs ſtill leſs than it does the French. But if Voltaire has really depreciated the French tranſlation of the Spectator to Mr. Sharp, Voltaire has been as unjuſt to Monſieur Coſte, as he has to many other of his countrymen. His warmeſt admirers cannot deny, that he had wronged old Rouſſeau the poet, the Abbé des Fontaines, Fréron, the journaliſts of Trevoux, and many more, of whom he has repeatedly, and with the greateſt malice, endeavoured

voured to give a much worſe character than they deſerve. And was any man to model his opinions on Voltaire's aſſertion with regard to the French writers, the king of Pruſſia himſelf would ſmile at his credulity.

But if Mr. Voltaire has been unjuſt to many of his countrymen, he is ſtill more ſo to many who are foreigners in reſpect to him. See him play the critic on the Engliſh, the Italians, the Spaniards, and the Portugueſe, there is no end of his miſtakes, of his diſingenuity, of his foppery, and of his arrogance. Whether he commends or diſapproves, his cenſure is the offspring of envy, and his praiſe the child of affectation. In the above-mentioned tranſlation of Hamlet, he has turned into burleſque what was ſerious, and metamorphoſed ſolemnity into buffoonry. Yet, both by his tranſlation, and his remarks on the original, he wants to impoſe himſelf for a mighty connoiſſeur in Engliſh language and poetry. Nay, he

has ſo far ſucceeded in his malignant ſcheme of depreciating Shakeſpeare, that numberleſs of his countrymen think the Engliſh bard many degrees below the worſt dramatic writer ever produced by France. This is actually the prevalent opinion in that kingdom concerning Shakeſpeare: and this opinion is ſo far ſpread, that I myſelf was cenſured in print, by a ſcribbling friar of Bologna, for a favourable account I gave my countrymen of Shakeſpeare; and the friar's argument reſted upon this ſingle point, that Voltaire had been long in England as well as I, and had given an account of that ſame poet very different from mine. But was it poſſible to make Voltaire underſtand Engliſh as well as a native, and infuſe into him ſome ſenſe of ſhame at the ſame time, I am of opinion he would curſe himſelf for the greateſt literary impoſtor that ever exiſted, on his giving a new peruſal to his abſurd tranſlation of Hamlet. Yet let us be juſt to

this

this impoſtor, and ſay, that his diſingenuity in criticiſm, and his ignorance in foreign languages, do not take all literary merit from him. We ſhould be unjuſt, not to admire the great beauty of his Zaïre, and the noble ſimplicity of his Charles XII.

But ſince I am fallen on the ſubject of Voltaire's great ignorance of the Engliſh language, let the reader indulge me with a ſingle ſpecimen of his ſtill greater ignorance in the Italian. This affair concerns not only Mr. Voltaire, but Mr. Sharp: the one, for endeavouring to miſlead all Europe moſt groſly in its opinion of one of our theatrical writers, and the other, for having, when he ſpends ſo much time on theatrical matters, paſſed over wholly in ſilence a writer, who raiſed himſelf (however unworthily) to a high degree of tranſitory eminence. Indeed the controverſy which was carried on about this writer, when Mr. Sharp was in Italy, muſt have led Mr. Sharp to form ſome judgment

judgment on him, if he meant to give his countrymen the leaſt notion of the Italian ſtage above the ideas of a property-man in a playhouſe.

This writer, ſo magnified by Mr. Voltaire, and ſo neglected (with all other, good and bad) by Mr. Sharp, is Goldoni. Goldoni is a very voluminous playmonger, having publiſhed no leſs than thirty volumes of comedies. As his chief ſcope is always buſtle and ſhow, he has ſtunned the ears and captivated the heart of the vulgar, and of the Venetian gondoliers eſpecially, to whom he has paid ſo many fine compliments in many of his plays, praiſing them for their aſtoniſhing knowledge, taſte, and morality, that they proved his beſt friends for a long while. But his language is the moſt nauſeous medley of words and phraſes, taken from ſeveral of the Italian dialects, and tuſcanized in a moſt ridiculous manner, beſides being ſeaſoned with abundance of gallicisms. His ſentiments are conſtantly

ſo trite and ſo vulgar, whether he makes a ducheſs or a footman ſpeak, that thoſe of one may full as well fit the other. Goldoni knows no art, no ſcience. His blunders in law and in ethics, in phyſic and anatomy, in geography and natural hiſtory (for the fellow talks of every thing) are numerous beyond conception. In one of his plays, he makes a Londoner hint at the canals of London, imagining London to be ſuch a town as Venice; and makes another Engliſhman talk of a moſt dreadful and unfrequented foreſt within twenty miles of London, where an outlawed Scotch lord hid himſelf in a mountainous cave for many years. The manners of his country he paints after the life indeed, making the coffee-houſe men in Venice draw their ſwords and fight duels in their own ſhops, or before them, and diſarm gentlemen, whoſe livery they wore for many years before they took to the trade of ſelling coffee. He makes a gentleman go to beſiege in a military

form

form the houſe of his neighbour in a populous town, with a ſquadron of his domeſtic ſervants. He makes ladies, diſguiſed like pilgrims, go in ſearch of their runaway huſbands, or fight bravely with ſword and dagger either men or other ladies. As he has been uſed from his childhood to that ſlaviſh meanneſs and total dependance, in which the Venetian nobility keep their ſubjects, he has the idea of nobility ſo ſtrongly impreſſed upon him, and reveres him with ſuch an abjection, that he conſtantly gives it the preference to virtue itſelf. *Il decoro delle famiglie*, ſays he very gravely in one of his prefaces, *non deve eſſere ſacrificato al merito della virtú.* "*The dignity of high deſcent* "*ought not to be proſtituted to the merit of* "*virtue.*" Full of theſe vile notions he draws his low ſelf in all his characters, and renders an Engliſh peereſs outrageouſly mad at the thought of her brother's marriage with a virtuous woman of low rank. Then he ſends an Engliſh lord to

and the painter of nature. Nothing can cope with Goldoni's genius. The goddeſs of comedy has whiſpered wit in his ear, after having impregnated his fancy with humour. Goldoni, the immortal Goldoni, has reſcued Italy from harlequins and Gothic barbarity, and brought back once more the happy days of Plautus and

voſtre opere. Ho detto: ecco un uomo oneſto e buono, che ha purificata la ſcena Italiana, che inventa colla fantaſia, e ſcrive col ſenno. Oh che fecondità! mio ſignore, che purità! Avete riſcattato la voſtra patria dalle mani degli Arlecchini. Vorrei intitolare le voſtre commedie: l'Italia liberata da' Goti. La voſtra amicizia m'onora, m' incanta. Ne ſono obbligato al Signor Senatore Albergati, e voi dovete tutti i miei ſentimenti a voi ſolo. Vi auguro, mio ſignore, la vita la più lunga, la più felice, giacché non potete eſſere immortale come il voſtro nome. Intendete di farmi un grand' onore, e già m' avete fatto il più gran piacere.

This letter, with ſome other things written by Voltaire in praiſe of Goldoni, are printed in one of Goldoni's volumes, and I have been ſhown the original of this very letter by the nobleman named in it, who is heartily aſhamed of having, when too young, praiſed Goldoni to Voltaire.

Terence,

Terence, together with thoſe ſtill happier ones of Leo the Tenth, and Clement the Seventh. Goldoni's works ſhall laſt as long as taſte; and the great-grand-daughter of the great Corneille, who lives with him, ſhall by his direction ſtudy Goldoni's works, that ſhe may not only learn from them pure Italian, but alſo politeneſs, decency, and virtue.

Such is the panegyric made by Monſieur de Voltaire on our Goldoni, both in proſe and verſe, in good French and in wretched Italian: and exactly at the ſame time when Mr. Sharp was in Venice, a vehement paper-war was carried on by the Italians on account of Goldoni, and on the praiſes laviſhed on him by that famous Frenchman. Had Mr. Sharp, when in that town, only ſtept into a bookſeller's ſhop or a coffee-houſe, and made the leaſt enquiry about theatrical matters, it had been impoſſible for him not to hear of that paper-war. Some blockheads (and blockheads are very

plentiful in all countries) joined in opinion with the ſenſeleſs rabble of the Venetian gondoliers, and ſtood out with undaunted dulneſs for Goldoni and Voltaire; and ſome who in my opinion deſerve a better title, ridiculed the one and contemned the other.

In ſuch a country of ſlavery as Italy is, according to Mr. Sharp's fly remark, and where in his opinion *politics, religion, and liberty cannot be animadverted upon with ſafety*, it is eaſy to imagine, that this intereſting diſpute about Goldoni and his French panegyriſt, was a pretty univerſal ſubject of converſation. Yet Mr. Sharp does not ſo much as mention it, though he be an old friend of Voltaire, and though he had ſo fair an opportunity of doing it in one of his *five letters* ſo long and ſo tedious on the Italian ſtage. Such was Mr. Sharp's induſtry and care in collecting materials for his book: and yet *upon his arrival in ſo large and celebrated a city as Naples, he made the public ſpectacles*

his

his firſt purſuit: nay, he even gave a deſcription of *Teatro Novo* and *Teatro de' Fiorentini,* and ſtill more, *meaſured with his eye the amazing extent of the opera-ſtage, with the prodigious circumference of his boxes.*

To theſe, and other equally important remarks, Mr. Sharp has limited his criticiſms on our theatrical compoſitions, and abilities in exhibiting them. But as informations of this kind, and diſcuſſions on public ſpectacles, are generally entertaining, and reckoned ſometimes inſtructive, I intend in the next chapter to ſupply Mr. Sharp's omiſſions, and endeavour to give the Engliſh reader ſome idea of the Italian ſtage, and inform him in as ſuccinct a manner as poſſible of its riſe, progreſs, and preſent ſtate.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

THERE is no need of diſplaying much erudition to prove, that the Italians knew much ſooner than any modern people in Europe the true dramatic art, as no body converſant in literature is ignorant of this truth.

It is commonly believed, that the two firſt regular drama's which made their appearance in the weſtern world ſoon after the revival of learning, were the comedy of *Calandra* by cardinal Bibiena, and the tragedy of *Sophoniſba*, by Giangiorgio Triſſino: the Calandra exhibited at Florence for the firſt time, and the Sophoniſba at Vicenza.

The pleaſure given by thoſe two compoſitions, and by many other written at the ſame time, muſt have been very great

and very univerſal, ſince in the large library bequeathed a few years ago by Apoſtolo Zeno to the Dominican friars in Venice, there is a collection of about four thouſand ſuch performances, all written within the ſpace of a century, which go now amongſt us by the appellation of *commedie antiche*, *antient comedies*, whether they are comedies, tragedies, or tragi-comedies.

I have read in my younger days a large number of thoſe *commedie antiche*, which are all ſtill much admired by many of our ſcholars, on account of their having been moſt ſcrupulouſly modelled upon the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides, and the comedies of Plautus and Terence. But I do not wonder at the neglect in which they fell towards the beginning of the laſt century, which neglect ſtill continues. The tameneſs of their diction, the want of intereſting incidents, the inſipid ſimplicity of their plots, and, above all, the Greek and Roman manners that prevail in the

the beſt of them, at length cloyed and diſguſted the greater part.

Our theatrical compoſers were therefore obliged to furniſh their audiences with entertainments of more vivacity and greater intrigue. Accordingly another ſpecies of drama was cultivated throughout Italy, more conformable to the chearful temper of the nation, and more analogous to our cuſtoms; and the perſonages of this new kind of dramatic entertainments played in maſks.

Ricoboni, a famous Italian comedian at Paris, in a work which he has dedicated to an Engliſh queen, has very ſatisfactorily proved, that the maſked actors of the *commedie dell' arte* (a cant name for thoſe burleſque plays ſubſtituted to the *commedie antiche*) are not wholly of modern invention, but lineally deſcended from the Atellana's of the Romans, which kept their power of pleaſing the Italians from generation to generation through all the barbarous ages, ſtanding their ground in many

many obſcure parts of Italy againſt the regular tragedies and comedies produced by the numerous ſucceſſors of Triſſino and Bibiena.

Each of theſe maſked perſonages in the *commedie dell' arte* was originally intended as a kind of characteriſtical repreſentative of ſome particular Italian diſtrict or town. Thus *Pantalone* was a Venetian merchant, *Dottore* a Bologneſe phyſician, *Sparviento* a Neapolitan bragadocio, *Pullicinella* a wag of Apulia, *Giangurgolo* and *Coviello* two clowns of Calabria, *Gelſomino* a Roman beau, *Beltrame* a Milaneſe ſimpleton, *Brighella* a Ferrareſe pimp, and *Arlecchino* a blundering ſervant of Bergamo.

Each of theſe perſonages was clad in a peculiar dreſs; each had his peculiar maſk; and each ſpoke the dialect of the place he repreſented.

Beſides theſe and a few other ſuch perſonages, of which at leaſt four were introduced in each play, there were the *Amoroſo's* or *Innamorato's*; that is, ſome men

men and women who acted ſerious parts; with *Smeraldina*, *Colombina*, *Spilletta*, and other females who played the parts of *ſervetta's*, or *waiting-maids*. All theſe ſpoke Tuſcan or Roman, and wore no maſks.

Not many of the compoſitions, in which theſe maſked perſonages with the innamorato's and ſervetta's were introduced, are to be found printed, becauſe they were ſeldom written. Their authors only wrote in a very compendious way the buſineſs of each ſcene in a progreſſive order; and ſticking two copies of the *ſcenario* (ſo this kind of dramatic ſkeleton is called) in two lateral back parts of the ſtage before the entertainment began, each actor caught the ſubject of each ſcene with a glance whenever called forth by his cue, and either ſingly or colloquially ſpoke extempore to the ſubject. Of theſe ſcenario's, or ſkeletons, a good many are ſtill extant. One Flaminio Scala, a comedian, has publiſhed fifty of his own invention in 1611. I once ſaw the book, but could

not

not make much of any of his plots, which are not eaſily unravelled but by comedians long accuſtomed to catch their recriprocal hints.

This way of compoſing comedies will certainly be thought extremely odd by an Engliſhman accuſtomed to a greater regularity of compoſition, and he will imagine that they can be little better than imperfect and farcical performances. And ſo in a certain degree they are, and thought ſo to be by the greateſt part of our learned men, who have long wiſhed to ſee them baniſhed the Italian ſtage. Yet in ſpight of their critical auſterity I muſt own, that ſome of the actors, particularly *Sacchi* and *Fiorili*, (commonly called *Truffaldino** and *Tartaglia* from the characters in which they excel) whom I have lately ſeen in Venice, made me unwilling to join in

* *Truffaldino* or *Tracagnino* mean the ſame as *Arlechino*, Harlequin. *Tartaglia* means a *ſtutterer*, a *ſtammerer*.

opinion

opinion with our critics; and I cannot very cordially wiſh for a total alteration in our wonted manner of compoſing and exhibiting comedies, as the efforts which our actors are obliged to make when put to this hard ſtretch, are ſuch, that they give me often much greater occaſion for wonder than for criticiſm. Theſe plays are beſides a very ſingular peculiarity of our nation; and out of reſpect to ſuch a peculiarity, as well as to the antiquity of its origin, I think they ought to be kept up as long as poſſible, and that criticiſm ſhould rather be exerted in their emendation than their deſtruction.

A foreigner cannot eaſily conceive with what readineſs our actors perform their extempore parts, and how difficult it is, both for natives and foreigners, to find out that they ſpeak extempore. Mr. Garrick told me in Venice, that the comedian who pleaſed him moſt in Paris, was the *Pantalone* of what they call there *la Comedie Italienne*: and the famous

 Carlin,

Garlin, who perſonates Harlequin on the ſame ſtage, though he has brought himſelf to ſpeak almoſt always in French, ſpeaks with ſuch volubility and propriety, that his audience never can diſtinguiſh between his extempore and his written parts. Had Mr. Garrick heard *Sacchi* and *Fiorili* in Italy, I will venture to ſay, that he would have received from them full as much ſatisfaction as he did from the Harlequin and the Pantaloon at Paris.

But the delight given by theſe extempore performances depends chiefly on the abilities of the actors; and able actors in this way cannot be many, eſpecially in a country where there are no ſuch immenſe towns as London and Paris, that can afford a maintenance to numbers of them at once, out of which many will be brought by emulation to approach more or leſs to excellence. The Italians therefore, in order to help the middling actors, have introduced muſic upon the ſtage about the beginning of the laſt century,

which brought about the formation of thoſe muſical drama's now called *opera's*, when they are ſerious, and *opera buffa's* or *burletta's*, when they are burleſque.

Of the firſt writers of opera's, whether ſerious or burleſque, ſcarcely any have eſcaped oblivion, and none of them really merited to have their names preſerved. Zeno and Metaſtaſio are the only two, who are entitled to this honour.

Apoſtolo Zeno found the opera quite rude and imperfect, and he brought it within the juriſdiction of the Ariſtotelian precepts. As he was a great maſter of Greek, he endeavoured to give it a Greek caſt, and crouded it with duo's, trio's, and choruſſes, imitating as much as he could the ſtrophe, antiſtrophe, and epode of the antient Greek tragedies.

But though Zeno's invention be great, his characters various, his ſentiments juſt, and his plots well contrived, yet his diction has ſo little livelineſs and elegance, and his verſification is ſo uncouth, that his

his opera's are ſtill read by many, but ſet to muſic by few or none: and I have often fancied, that if his dramatic performances were well tranſlated into another language, they might be read with greater pleaſure than any of Metaſtaſio's, as the ſentiments are more thick-ſown, his invention greater, and his characters better marked than Metaſtaſio's.

Metaſtaſio's operas upon the whole are far from having all Zeno's dramatical perfections; but they are likewiſe far from having his chief defects. The elegance, livelineſs, and rapidity of Metaſtaſio's diction are not to be paralleled, and his numbers are enchanting. His airs, duo's, and choruſſes run into muſic with ſurpriſing facility, and our compoſers have but little trouble in cloathing them with harmony; ſo that it is chiefly to him, that they owe that honour of muſical preeminence which they have inconteſtably enjoyed throughout Europe for theſe many years.

As for our *opera buffa's* or *burletta's*, though we have a multitude of them, yet not one is worth reading. Abſurdity, meanneſs, and a little ribaldry too, are their chief ornaments. Yet our muſical compoſers know at preſent their trade ſo well, that they render them pleaſing to the numerous vulgar. Every ſenſible Italian is aſhamed of them, and looks with contempt and indignation on thoſe verſe-mongers who write them. But their ſhame, contempt, and indignation are of no ſervice to their country, as not only the low minded Italians are delighted with them, but even the nations that boaſt of politeneſs and taſte ſuperior to ours, make it a point to encourage ſuch mongrel compoſitions.

The *commedie dell' arte*, the *opera's*, and the *burletta's*, were not the only theatrical entertainments ſubſtituted by the Italians to the *comemdie antiche*. They invented likewiſe two other drama's, one called

commedie

commedie paſtorali, paſtoral plays, the other *commedie ruſtiche, ruſtic plays.*

Of paſtoral plays ſome hundred are ſtill to be found in the collections of the curious. But as paſtoral life never exiſted but in the innocent imagination of love-ſick girls, paſtoral plays could never allure the many, and ſupport themſelves long. None of them, for aught I know, has been exhibited in Italy within theſe fifty years, and our young people only ſtill read a few of them; namely, *Aminta* by Taſſo, *Paſtor Fido* by Guarini, *Filli di Sciro* by Bonarelli, and *Alceo* by Ongaro; to which our harmleſs nuns join the *Filarmindo,* the author of which I do not at preſent recollect. But our critics and people of taſte look upon theſe and other ſuch compoſitions with much leſs eſteem than our forefathers did, as they find them abounding with imaginary manners, unnatural ſentiments, puerile conceits, and epigrammatical turns. The faſhion of paſtoral plays is now ſo utterly exploded through-

out Italy, that the revered name of Politian himſelf cannot reſcue his *Orfeo* * from total diſregard; and the learned themſelves ſcarcely know the exiſtence of that performance.

As to *ruſtic plays* we never had many, and of them only the *Tancia* is generally known to polite readers. This *Tancia* was written by Michelangelo Bonaroti, a nephew of the famous Michelangelo. It is a regular drama in rhyme; and its perſonages are Florentine peaſants. The neatneſs of its language, and the truth of its manners are delightful. For my part I look upon it as one of the moſt capital pieces that Italy ever produced; and was only a ſingle play of ours to be ſaved from oblivion, I would give my vote for the *Tancia*. However it is acted no more, as it would not be eaſy to find

* This was the firſt paſtoral play written in Italian. The firſt edition of it has no date: the ſecond was printed *In Venezia per Nicolò Zoppino*, 1524.

a number

a number of actors fit to repreſent it; and it is only brought ſometimes on the private ſtages of our colleges by way of entertainment to young ſtudents in the autumnal vacancies, or the carnival-time.

To this ſhort account of the Italian ſtage I have only to add, that within theſe forty or fifty years the *commedie dell' arte*, together with the *opera's* both ſerious and burleſque have greatly prevailed over all other theatrical entertainments.

However in theſe late years ſome new and conſiderable additions have been made to our ſtock; and a ſhort account of thoſe additions I hope will not prove diſagreeable in the next chapter.

CHAP. XII.

WHEN the names of the French tragic writers, and eſpecially thoſe of Corneille and Racine, began to be commonly known in Italy, ſome of our wits thought of giving us tragedies modelled after the French manner. Many ſuch were therefore written in a little time, amongſt which the *Merope* by the marquis Maffei, the *Uliſſe* by Lazzarini, the *Elettra* by count Gaſparo Gozzi, and a few more met with much approbation on ſeveral ſtages of Italy; and it is probable they will not ſoon be forgotten, as they are not written with that humility of language and weakneſs of verſification which predominate in all our ancient tragedies.

We have likewiſe ſeen repreſented of late by our actors almoſt all the tragedies of

of Corneille, Racine, Crebillon, and Voltaire, tranſlated into blank verſe. But our polite people cannot fill a play-houſe by themſelves, and our vulgar cannot as yet be brought to reliſh ſuch compoſitions. They are ſtill ſtrangers to the pleaſure of weeping, and would ſtill have kept invariably faithful to their Harlequins, Pantaloons, Brighella's, and the other maſks, if Goldoni and Chiari had not ſuddenly made their appearance about eighteen or twenty years ago.

Of Goldoni I have already ſaid enough to give a ſufficient idea of the man as a compoſer of plays. And of the abbot Pietro Chiari I have nothing elſe to ſay, but that he is, if poſſible, ſtill worſe than Goldoni in every particular.

Theſe two ſtrange mortals were both in the ſame year accidentally engaged to compoſe comedies for two different ſtages at Venice. It is not to be conceived how prodigiouſly popular they both became after having exhibited two or three of their fantaſtical

fantaſtical and abſurd compoſitions, and how quickly they brought ſhow, and noiſe, and nonſenſe into vogue: the like has never been ſeen in any country. However it muſt be obſerved, that part of their rapid popularity they owed to their ſatirizing one another upon the ſtage in a moſt unmerciful manner; and the Italians are not leſs pleaſed with bull-baiting than the Engliſh. It was by this means chiefly, that our two combatants divided our people into parties, ſome countenancing one, and ſome ſupporting the other; nor need my Engliſh readers be told what the conſequence of parties is, let their object be ever ſo unimportant.

None of Goldoni's and Chiari's productions can really ſtand the teſt of criciſm. They both were born without wit, and educated without learning. Yet an epidemical phrenzy in their favour ſeized the Venetians, both high and low, and quickly ſpread itſelf from Veniſe to almoſt all parts of Italy. That phrenry

was

was then much encreaſed by the prepoſterous praiſes laviſhed by Monſieur de Voltaire on Goldoni, as they contributed much to his getting ſome ſuperiority over his antagoniſt.

Theſe fruitful geniuſſes in the ſpace of about ten years ſupplied our many ſtages with ſeveral hundred of plays; and Goldoni in particular boaſted in one of them, intitled *Il Teatro Comico*, that he had compoſed *ſixteen comedies in a year*, of which he produced the titles from the mouth of an actor.

Such a rapidity of entertainments rendered the two pſeudo-poets abſolute ſovereigns of the ſtage; and no body knows how long their empire would have laſted, if ſome learned men, tired with their double deluge of nonſenſe, had not begun to harraſs them both with criticiſm.

One Carlo Gozzi, younger brother to count Coſparo Gozzi already mentioned, was the firſt that fell hard upon Goldoni and Chiari; and many others ſoon followed.

lowed. The two bards, finding themſelves attacked very cloſely, thought prudent to ſuſpend their mutual animoſity, clapped up a haſty peace, and joined to oppoſe their cenſurers. Chiari was a great proſe-ſcribbler as well as a comedy-monger; ſo that a briſk paper-war was quickly commenced, which grew hotter and hotter by rapid degrees.

It happened one day, that Carlo Gozzi met with Goldoni in a bookſeller's ſhop. They exchanged ſharp words; and in the heat of the altercation Goldoni told his mercileſs critic, that it was an eaſy taſk to find fault with a play; but deſired him to obſerve, that to write a play was a very difficult one. Gozzi replied, that to find fault with a play was really eaſy: but that it was ſtill eaſier to write ſuch plays as would pleaſe ſo thoughtleſs a nation as the Venetians; adding with a tone of contempt, that he had a good mind to make all Venice run to ſee *The Tale of the Three Oranges* formed into a comedy.

comedy. Goldoni, with ſome of his partizans then in the ſhop, challenged Gozzi to do it if he could; and the critic thus piqued, engaged to produce ſuch a comedy within a few days.

Who could ever have thought that to this trifling and caſual diſpute Italy ſhould owe the greateſt dramatic writer that it ever had! Gozzi quickly wrote a comedy in five acts, intitled *I tre Aranci, The three Oranges*, formed out of an old woman's tale, with which the Venetian children are much entertained by their nurſes. The comedy was acted, and the three beautiful princeſſes born of the three enchanted oranges made all Venice croud to the theatre of St. Angelo.

It may eaſily be imagined, that Goldoni and Chiari were not ſpared in the *Tre Aranci*. Gozzi found means to introduce in it a good many of their theatrical abſurdities, and expoſed them to public deriſion. The Venetians, like all other Italians, do not greatly care for the labour

of

of ſearching after truth, and their imagination runs too often away with them, while their judgment lies dormant. But point out ſenſe to them, and they will inſtantly ſeize it. This was remarkably the caſe on the firſt night that the comedy of the Three Oranges was acted. The fickle Venetians forgot inſtantly the loud acclamations with which they had received the greateſt part of Goldoni and Chiari's plays, laughed obſtreperouſly at them both, and applauded the Three Oranges in a moſt frantic manner.

This good ſucceſs encouraged Gozzi to write more; and his new plays changed in a little time ſo intirely the taſte of the Venetian audiences, that in about two ſeaſons Goldoni was utterly ſtripped of his theatrical honours, and poor Chiari totally annihilated. Goldoni quitted Italy and went to France, confiding much in Mr. Voltaire's intereſt and recommendations, which, as I have heard, procured him the place of Italian maſter to one of the

princeſſes at Verſailles, and Chiari retired to a country-houſe in the neighbourhood of Breſcia.

In the years 1764 and 1765 I have ſeen acted in Venice ten or twelve of Gozzi's plays, and had even the peruſal of two or three of them in manuſcript; and no works of this kind ever pleaſed me ſo much: ſo that, when I ſaw Mr. Garrick there, I lamented that he did not come in carnival-time, that he might have ſeen ſome of them acted; and I am confident he would have admired the originality of Gozzi's genius, the moſt wonderful, in my opinion, next Shakeſpeare, that ever any age or country produced. The caſt of Gozzi's mind leads him to ſtrike out many characters and beings not to be found in nature, like that of Caliban in the Tempeſt; and yet moſt natural and true like Caliban's.

To his aſtoniſhing power of invention, ſo rare amongſt modern poets, Gozzi joins great purity and force of language, harmony

harmony of verſification, intricacy of plot, multiplicity of incidents, probability of cataſtrope, variety of decoration, and many other excellencies expected in the modern drama. It is a pity that this author could never be prevailed upon to publiſh his plays. He has reſiſted the ſtrongeſt ſolicitations of his friends, without giving any ſatisfactory reaſon for his averſion to ſuch a publication. Some attribute it to his partiality for an actreſs, to whom he leaves the profits ariſing from their exhibition: but this I can ſcarcely believe, as her profits from ſuch a publication would be much more conſiderable than thoſe which ſhe reaps by her acting. I rather think that having no great value for his audience, Gozzi ſets likewiſe but little value on the things that pleaſe them: and perhaps it was a ſimilar reaſon, that kept Shakeſpeare from publiſhing a correct and complete edition of his plays while he lived. May the good genius of the Italian ſtage befriend Gozzi's compoſitions,

ſitions, and not ſuffer it to be robbed of them. I hope they will meet with a better fate than Shakeſpeare's, and that future commentators will not be put to the trouble of reſtoring his paſſages, rectifying his ſentences, explaining his obſcurities, and adjuſting his orthography.

Such was the origin and progreſs, and ſuch is the preſent ſtate of the Italian ſtage. I will not ſay that Mr. Sharp ought to have given ſuch a circumſtantial account of our theatrical abilities and performances. A ſtranger, as I ſaid before, has need to live the beſt part of his life in a foreign country to qualify himſelf for ſuch narrations; and any man may ſtand eaſily excuſed when he paſſes lightly over ſuch ſubjects in his travelling accounts. But no ſtranger can avoid the imputation of ſelf-conceit when, on his return home after a ſhort ramble over any country, he launches out into ſuch ample and multifarious ſubjects, and pretends to give his countrymen true ideas of things, of which

he knows nothing, and could know nothing. Let any man unacquainted with Italy read Mr. Sharp's *Five Letters* on the Italian ſtage, and he will preſently conclude that the Italians are a people moſt miſerably ignorant of theatrical matters; that they have baniſhed all ſenſe and propriety from their drama's; and that they cannot be pleaſed with any thing but farcical buffoonry. But is this giving a true idea of the Italians and of their ſtage? Certainly not. The mighty cenſurer ought to have got better information before he wrote on ſuch a ſubject; and ſince he pretends to ſuch ſkill in Italian, as to know even the Venetian dialect, he ought to have mentioned Carlo Gozzi and Metaſtaſio, as they are dramatic writers not to be equalled by any of modern England and France. What ſhall we then call Mr. Sharp's Five Letters?

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

IF Mr. Sharp is guilty of the moſt ridiculous ſelf-conceit when he ſpeaks at large of the preſent ſtate of the Italian ſtage, he likewiſe incurs the ſuſpicion of diſingenuity when we take notice, that he has paſt over in the moſt profound ſilence the preſent ſtate of Italian literature.

How could this man, who lays the ſtrongeſt claims to literary honours, neglect a topic which above all others muſt prove intereſting to the moſt ſenſible part of the Engliſh readers? How could he be ſo ſevere when he expatiated on our ignorance and follies, and then be ſo forgetful of cenſorial juſtice as not to ſpeak a ſingle word of our knowledge and our wiſdom? To what end did he give an account of his travels through Italy, if he did not viſit our ſeveral univerſities, and

enter our numerous libraries? If he was not even ſolicitous for the leaſt information or perſonal acquaintance with any one of the many men of learning that live at preſent amongſt us? Let us ſuppoſe for a moment, that all memorials of the preſent Italians were to be deſtroyed, and only the account given of them by Mr. Sharp was kept in being, what a judgment would poſterity form of them! Poor folks, how they would be wronged!

I will not here enquire whether in the celebrated age of Leo X. there was more real knowledge in Italy than there is at preſent. Such a diſcuſſion would lead me too far; and I am withal afraid, that it would prove too hard for my abilities. Let us ſuppoſe beſides, that after a long exame. I ſhould at laſt declare for the preſent age, have I not reaſon to think that my contemporaries would never ſuffer themſelves to be convinced by my arguments? Mankind in general are ſuch *laudatores temporis acti*; they are ſo bigot-

ted

ted to ancient times, that even the moſt learned men of Leo's age frequently complained of the ignorance of their times, and ſet the preceding centuries far above their own, both for ſcience and arts.

Avoiding therefore a diſcuſſion which might be deemed invidious, or at leaſt prove fruitleſs, I ſhall only obſerve, that learning cannot procure in our days that veneration to its poſſeſſors from all claſſes of people, and eſpecially from princes and great lords, which it procured them ſoon after its reſtoration. Learning therefore is now cultivated both in Italy and in other parts of Europe, more out of regard to its uſe and convenience in common life, than for any great hopes of arriving by its means at conſiderable advantages or univerſal reputation. Our ſtock of books on all ſorts of ſubjects is ſo ample at this day, that learned and ingenious men cannot now have that facility which our predeceſſors had, of making themſelves known to their contemporaries, and

recommending themſelves to public notice by handling a new ſubject. We have not, like our predeceſſors, any very powerful incentives from honour or from intereſt to encreaſe the number of quarto's and folio's; and this is one of the reaſons why many perſons at preſent, in Italy as well as in England and in other countries, cultivate the fields of literature in privacy and humble content; and yet have laid in much greater ſtores of knowledge than ever Bembo or Sadoleto; but keep them to themſelves, or ſhare them only with the beſt and moſt intimate of their friends, without ever thinking of carrying them to any public market by means of the preſs. A cardinal's hat is not now to be graſped at by climbing up the ladders of Greek and Latin; and a learned man in theſe days may indeed obtain by induſtry or chance ſome petty advantage; but a biſhopric in Italy as well as in England, is ſeldom the reward of mere merit and learning. Whatever a

ſtudious recluſe ſurrounded by his books may think of the illuſtrious age of Leo, when I conſider the wonderful progreſs that all ſciences have made all over Europe within theſe three laſt centuries, I am almoſt tempted to think, that, excluſive of the knowledge of learned languages, the real knowledge of the preſent Engliſh women alone, were it poſſible to bring it all together, would prove not much inferiour to the real knowledge of that illuſtrious age, with which ſhallow ſatiriſts and peeviſh poets of all countries reproach the degeneracy of their own.

Granting however that the modern Italians are not upon the whole ſo ſtudious and ſo learned as their *cinquecentiſti* *, their *anceſtors of Leo's age*; yet it is wrong

* The Italians give this collective name to the learned who flouriſhed in the ſixteenth century, as they call *Trecentiſti*, *Quattrocentiſti*, and *Secentiſti* thoſe who flouriſhed in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and ſeventeenth centuries.

in foreigners to ſuppoſe, that they are quite deſtitute of literary merit.

Let any Engliſhman enter the public libraries of Italy, and he will boaſt no longer of thoſe of Oxford and of Cambridge, of Greſham and the Muſeum. I have looked with due reverence on thoſe four, as well as on many more in ſeveral parts of this kingdom both public and private: but none of them raiſed my wonder, as they naturally brought back to my remembrance the Ambroſiana at Milan, that of St. Mark at Venice, the Magliabechiana and the Laurentiana at Florence, and the Vaticana at Rome. Theſe ſtand in no need of additional ſhelves to vie with the moſt famous Engliſh libraries. In Turin, Pavia, Parma, Padua, Piſa, Modena, Bologna, and Naples, there are likewiſe ample collections of books for public uſe*: and there

* Miſſon in his travels reckons fourteen in Venice only, ſome of which are larger than St. Mark's; and almoſt all public.

is ſcarce a town, or even a convent throughout Italy without a private or a public library. Many people alſo have their private ones, and ſome of them very conſiderable. I will only mention that of count Pertuſati at Milan, which contains above one hundred thouſand volumes, and for which twenty-five thouſand Engliſh pounds were once offered by the late emperor.

It would be endleſs to enumerate all the treaſures of learning thus accumulated in numberleſs parts of Italy; and the Italians are not to be ſuppoſed ſo abſurd, as to keep their libraries for mere ſhow, or only for the pleaſure of feeding moths and mice. Many men are to be found in them, whoſe lives were early devoted to the acquiſition of knowledge. Ambition and curioſity act upon the inhabitants of Italy with full as much force as they do upon thoſe of other countries, and many of the preſent Italians were made

great

great ſcholars either by one or the other of theſe two powerful movers.

But few are the cultivators of ſcience, whoſe names are wafted by fame to diſtant regions, eſpecially during their lives; and the greateſt part of them muſt be contented to enjoy renown only in thoſe places that gave them birth. They cannot all have a king of Pruſſia for a patron and a panegyriſt, who will deign to take the trouble of gilding all Voltaire's ſilver, and all Algarotti's copper. However, though extended literary reputation be ſcarce attainable by the ſons of learning while they live, and though the approaches towards it be very gradual and ſlow, yet the names of ſome living Italians have reached England and other parts of Europe, and thoſe of Metaſtaſio the poet, Morgagni the anatomiſt, Friſio the mathematician, and father Beccaria the electric philoſopher, are names no longer confined to their ſide of the Alps. Valliſnieri, Muratori, Maffei, Cocchi, Poleni, Gori, Giannoni,

Giannoni, Buonamici, and Beccari, who died but lately, were not names unknown in other countries. Bianchi and Batarra of Rimini, Lami of Florence, Manſi the preſent archbiſhop of Lucca, Della Torre and Mazzocchi of Naples, the marquis Fagnano of Sinigaglia, are likewiſe names with which many profeſſors of ſcience are acquainted throughout all Europe. To theſe and ſome others, I might without any great impropriety add thoſe of Boſcovich * the aſtronomer, and Aſſemanno the oriental linguiſt, who have had their education and acquired their knowledge amongſt us. But though only a few of the learned of Italy have been ſo happy as to have their names known beyond their mountains and their ſeas, yet there are many who do honour to their country with their mental acquiſitions. In poetry, beſides Metaſtaſio and the two Gozzi's,

* Father Boſcovich is a Raguſean, and monſignor Aſſemanno an Aſſyrian.

we

we have Paſſeroni at Milan, who has printed a kind of ſatirical epic poem in thirty-three canto's, which abounds in wit, humour, and learning. Under the pretence of relating Cicero's life, this fanciful poet laſhes the vices, and points out the foibles that predominate now amongſt his countrymen: and, making due allowance for poetical exaggeration, it is in Paſſeroni's poem that foreigners ought to look for ſure information concerning our cuſtoms and manners, and not in the idle and ſhallow performances of Mr. Sharp and other ſuch conceited and ignorant travellers.

At Milan likewiſe, there is one Parini, who will certainly prove a very eminent poet, if he continues to write. His *Mattino* and *Mezzodì* have filled me with hopes, that he will ſoon be the Pope or the Boileau of Italy, as he is already almoſt equal to them in juſtneſs of thinking and exactneſs of expreſſion, and ſeems

to

to ſurpaſs them in richneſs of imagery and fecundity of invention.

Many other followers of the muſes ſwarm all over Italy, and ſome of them are in high repute in the places where they reſide: but I cannot much praiſe any of them, as I know none poſſeſſed of much invention: and what is a poet without invention?

Some of my readers will be ready to ſay here, that I do not offer much in commendation of my country when I reckon but five poets in it at this time. But can many centuries boaſt of many more? and can England, or France, or any other country now muſter up a much larger number?

The number of our men well verſed in ſeveral parts of ſcience, is certainly much larger than that of our poets. In all our univerſities every kind of literature is much cultivated, and every one of them can boaſt of ſome eminent profeſſor. In

ſome

ſome of them the eaſtern languages eſpecially, may be learned with much greater eaſe and expedition than in any other univerſity in Europe, as their libraries are more amply furniſhed with eaſtern books and manuſcripts, and our profeſſors of thoſe languages multiplied by the religious neceſſity of keeping up a large body of miſſionaries. In Venice and in Rome one may meet every day with men deeply ſkilled in oriental literature. Let me only mention here one, who is the moſt aſtoniſhing linguiſt in my opinion that ever exiſted. I mean father Bonifacio Finetti, a Dominican friar, who in the year 1756 publiſhed ten diſſertations on the Hebrew language and its derivatives; that is, the Rabbinical, the Chaldaic, the Syriac, the Samaritan, the Phenician or Punic, the literal Arabic, the vulgar Arabic, and the Amharic. Theſe ten diſſertations were given in a volume * by father

* This book is intiled TRATTATO *della lingua Ebraica e ſue affini, del padre Bonifacio Fineiti dell ordine de'*

Finetti as a ſpecimen of a larger work, which he intended to write upon all languages both antient and modern.

My learned reader will perhaps ſtart to hear of a man, who intended to write a work *on all languages, both ancient and modern*; and I muſt ſay, that when I firſt caſt my eye on the title page of Finetti's ſpecimen, the firſt thought that occurred was, that its author could be no better than a literary quack or a madman. But the reading of his Ten Diſſertations gave me reaſon to alter my haſty judgment; and I had then no reſt until I procured myſelf the honour of his perſonal acquaintance.

This friar is now near eighty years old, of which he has employed ſixty at leaſt in ſtudying languages. As in the courſe of his life he ſcarcely ever ſtirred from

de' predicatori, offerto agli eruditi per SAGGIO *dell' opera da lui intrappreſa ſopra i linguaggi di tutto il mondo. In Venezia* 1756, *appreſſo Antonio Zatta.*

his

his cell, he is not commonly known, not even in Venice, though it be the place of his birth and conſtant reſidence. However he has found means in his long ſolitude to have from the miſſionaries ſent *in partibus infidelium* by the college of the propaganda at Rome, and from all corners of the world, all ſorts of books and manuſcripts that could facilitate the ſtudy of the remoteſt tongues.

I have myſelf brought many Engliſh travellers acquainted with him, and they were as much pleaſed with the converſation of the reverend old man, as ſurpriſed at his odd library, which conſiſts chiefly of grammars, dictionaries, bibles, catechiſms, prayers, memorials, letters, treaties of peace or commerce, itineraries, and other things of this ſort, written in the moſt obſcure languages of Europe, Aſia, Africa, and America.

Being about ſeventy years of age, he formed the deſign of communicating ſome part of his immenſe knowledge to the world,

world, and published his Ten Dissertations on the Hebrew language and its derivatives for a specimen, as I said, upon all languages, ancient and modern. This is a translation of part of his preface to that specimen.

" *The* FIRST CHAPTER *of my work,* " says he, *shall be this very specimen, a* " *little enlarged. We shall thus begin our* " *great language-journey from the east,* " *where the Hebrew transports us directly:* " *and running over the eastern countries, we* " *shall only step a while from Arabia into* " *Africa to pay a visit to the Ethiopic and* " *Amharic languages, because these are both* " *daughters of the Hebrew. From Africa* " *we shall then return immediately to Asia,* " *and even enter some parts of Europe,* " *that we may speak of other oriental* " *tongues which have likewise some affinity* " *with the Hebrew. Our* SECOND CHAPTER *therefore shall give an account of all* " *those other eastern languages that reach* " *from the eastern part of Europe to the river*

 " *Indus,*

" *Indus, and owe ſome part of their origin*
" *to the Hebrew tongue; that is, the Greek,*
" *the Armenian, the Turkiſh, and the Per-*
" *ſian. Then without turning our back to*
" *the riſing ſun, we will run through the*
" *Eaſt-Indies, and give an account in our*
" THIRD CHAPTER *of the Eaſt-Indian*
" *tongues; that is, the Indoſtanic, the*
" *Malaccan, the Malabarical, the Male-*
" *jamic, the Tamulic, the Telugic, the Sia-*
" *meſe, and ſome others. Continuing then*
" *our journey the ſame way, we ſhall ſpeak*
" *in the* FOURTH CHAPTER *of the lan-*
" *guages of the furthermoſt eaſt; that is, of*
" *the Anamitic, which comprehends the*
" *Chineſe, the Cochinchineſe, the Japaneſe,*
" *the Formoſan, and ſome others. Then we*
" *will turn our ſteps to the north, and*
" *entering the moſt eaſtern Tartary, we will*
" *go a journey retrogade to our firſt; that*
" *is, we will turn to the weſt, for to come*
" *back again to Europe, after having viſited*
" *thoſe vaſt regions. Therefore the* FIFTH
" CHAPTER *ſhall be of the Tartar-*
" *languages;*

" *languages; and as far as our few books in*
" *them can lead us, we ſhall ſay ſomething*
" *of the Majuric tongue, which is ſpoke by*
" *the Chineſe Tartars; and of the Mongu-*
" *leſe, the Tibettan or Tanguttan, the Cal-*
" *mucic, the Crimean, and ſome others.*
" *From the Greater Tartary continuing our*
" *journey to the weſt we enter into Muſ-*
" *covy, and from the Leſſer Tartary into*
" *Poland. Both in Muſcovy and Poland*
" *we meet with the tongue commonly called*
" *Sclavonian, though it ought to be Slavo-*
" *nian or Slaviſh, which ſome call likewiſe*
" *Illyric. Our* SIXTH CHAPTER *ſhall*
" *then treat of the ancient Sclavonian tongue,*
" *and of its derivatives; that is, the Muſ-*
" *covite, the Poliſh, the Bohemian, the Van-*
" *dalic, the Illyric or Dalmatian, the Cor-*
" *niolan, and others. To the weſt of the*
" *countries where the Sclavonian tongues*
" *are ſpoken, there is Germany and other*
" *countries, where we meet many languages*
" *of Germanic origin. The ancient language*
" *of Germany is by ſome called Old Gothic,*

" *by others Teutonic, and ſtill by others*
" *Norrene, Norman, or Northern. The*
" SEVENTH CHAPTER *therefore ſhall treat*
" *of the ancient Germanic tongue, and of its*
" *ſeveral derivatives, both ancient and mo-*
" *dern. The modern, beginning from the*
" *farther north, are the Icelandic, to which*
" *we will join the Greenlandiſh, as we ſhall*
" *have no properer place for it than this;*
" *then the Swediſh, the Norvegian, the Da-*
" *niſh, the Engliſh, the Low-Dutch, and*
" *the High-Dutch; and this laſt will be*
" *the firſt of which we ſhall ſpeak. Amongſt*
" *the ancient Germanic tongues there are the*
" *Runic, the Anglo-Saxon, the Meſogothic,*
" *the Teotiſk, and ſome others. From Ger-*
" *many, turning our ſteps to the weſt, we*
" *will enter France, and there find one of*
" *the prettieſt daughters of the Latin*
" *tongue; then the Italian, the Spaniſh,*
" *and the Portugueſe, with a few others of*
" *inferiour rank. In the* EIGHTH CHAP-
" TER *therefore we ſhall dwell a while with*
" *them, after having paid our reſpectful*
" *compliments*

" *compliments to their noble mother the Latin*
" *tongue. And behold! we are here come to*
" *the utmoſt verge of Europe. However,*
" *before we ſet ſail for Africa, we muſt*
" *needs ſpeak of ſeveral languages incloſed*
" *in ſome narrow ſpaces, which having little*
" *or no offspring of their own, are by the*
" *linguiſts called* SMALL TONGUES. *Yet*
" *theſe too deſerve our attention; and we*
" *ſhall therefore form our* NINTH CHAPTER
" *of the ſmall tongues of Europe, in which*
" *are compriſed the Hungarian, the Lithu-*
" *anian, the Livonian, the Finlandiſh, the*
" *Welch with the Cornwallian, Iriſh, Ar-*
" *moric, and other of its dialects; the Biſ-*
" *cayan, which is thought to be the ancient*
" *Spaniſh; the Albaneſe, and ſome others.*
" *Then we will croſs over to Africa. But*
" *in that country, though much larger than*
" *Europe, I fear we ſhall not be able to*
" *travel much, becauſe of the drearineſs of*
" *its deſarts, and the barbarity of its na-*
" *tions: beſides that we ſhall already have*

" *viſited the Barbary-States upon occaſion*
" *of the Arabic language commonly ſpoke*
" *there, and the empire of Abyſſinia, where*
" *the Ethiopic and the Amharic tongues are*
" *predominant. However Egypt will keep*
" *us a while with the Coptic tongue or Old*
" *Egyptian. This tongue ſhall form the*
" *chief ornament of the* TENTH CHAP-
" TER; *and in it we ſhall ſpeak alſo of*
" *ſome others, eſpecially of the ancient Afri-*
" *can, now called Tamagzet, and of the*
" *Congoyan, Angolian, Melindan, Otten-*
" *totic, Madagaſcaric, and ſome others.*
" *From Africa then we ſhall ſail to Ame-*
" *rica, travel it all over, liſten to the va-*
" *rious ſpeeches of thoſe wild nations, and*
" *interpret them as far as we ſhall be aſſiſted*
" *by our books. Of the American languages*
" *we ſhall make two chapters. The firſt,*
" *which will be the* ELEVENTH *in our work,*
" *ſhall treat of the languages of North-*
" *America; and the ſecond, which will be*
" *the* TWELFTH *in order, ſhall comprehend*
" *thoſe*

" *thoſe of South-America. In the firſt of*
" *theſe two chapters we will ſpeak of the*
" *Mexican, the Pocomanic, the Virginian,*
" *the Algonkine, the Huronic, the Carib-*
" *bean, and others; and in the ſecond, of*
" *the Braſilian, the Chileſe, the Peruvian,*
" *and others. And with this chapter we*
" *ſhall put an end to our long and laborious*
" *peregrination.*"

Such was to be the work deſigned by my reverend friend father Finetti, a work grand in the deſign, and as far as it went, complete in the execution; a work that would have reflected infinite honour upon his country, as it would have added immenſely to that ſtock of philological knowledge already poſſeſſed by the Europeans; and what is ſtill of greater importance, would have appriſed the ſtudious part of mankind by a ſtriking example, of the vaſt and moſt incredible acquiſitions the human mind can make, when long and inceſſantly employed upon the purſuit of knowledge. But alas! the noble ſpe-

cimen that he gave us of the intended work, which he printed at his own expence, for a long time did not ſell! The ſtrangeneſs of its title, the obſcurity of its author, the ſtupidity of his fellow-friars, the barbarous inattention of the Venetians, and ſome other cauſes, unfortunately concurred to make this grand performance be neglected: and as father Finetti, like the generality of our friars, had no money to ſpare for the printing of it, he did not care for the trouble of writing it. Thus the literary world has been for ever robbed of his other eleven volumes, to the everlaſting ſorrow of every cultivator of knowledge! It is true that eight years after the firſt edition of the firſt volume, all the copies of it were ſold in a few weeks upon the ſtrong recommendation of a periodical writer, who happened by chance to read it: but the heavy addition of eight years to the old age of the author, had ſo diſabled him, that now he could write no more; and thus

thus Italy and the whole world muſt for ever bemoan this great loſs, as in all probability no man will ever again be found ſo well qualified for ſo terrifying an undertaking.

After this account of our Finetti, there is no need of introducing any other of my countrymen to the acquaintance of the Engliſh. But ſhould any of my readers go to viſit Italy, and be deſirous to inquire a little into the literature of it, I take the liberty of throwing here in a note * the names of ſome few amongſt

* At *Florence*, Perelli, Pompeo Neri, Bandini, Targioni, Manetti, Nannoni, and Nelli.
At *Rome*, Stai, Mammacchi, Maratti, Giacomelli, Zelada, Garampi, and Borgia.
At *Bologna*, two Zanotti's, Fantoni, two Taruffi's, (one of whom ſpeaks Engliſh wonderfully well) Monti, Ferdinand Baſſi, and the lady Laura Baſſi.
At *Naples*, Genoveſi, Gaetti, Martorelli, Coturnio, (the diſcoverer of two aqueducts in the ear never obſerved by former anatomiſts) and marquis Bomba.

our learned, with whoſe converſation or works I am ſure any Engliſhman will be pleaſed, let his knowledge be ever ſo great and ſo multifarious.

At *Modena*, Vandelli.
At *Padua*, Marſili, Carmeli, and Maſtrega.
At *Piſa*, Matani and Adami.
At *Cortona*, Coltellini.
At *Lucca*, Benvenuti.
At *Siena*, Baldaſſarri, Tabarrini, and Piſtoi.
At *Volterra*, Guarnaci.
At *Parma*, Pacciaudi.
At *Imola*, count Zampieri.
At *Rimini*, Bonſi, beſides Bianchi, and Batarra, already named.
At *Peſaro*, Olivieri.
At *Ancona*, Mauri, Stampini, and Cecco Storani, already named.
At *Macerata*, two Mozzi's, Compagnoni, and Auriſpa.
At *Milan*, Imbonati, two Villa's, Baleſtrieri, Irico, and many more.
At *Genoa*, Giambattiſta Negroni, Viali, Celeſia, Gaſtaldi, and Pizzorno.
At *Caſal*, in Montferrat, Cocconati, Griſella, and Gambera.
At *Turin*, Broardi, Quaregna, Lavriano, Somis, Alione, etc.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

AFTER the above ſlight account of our literature, it may not be improper to ſpeak of the advantages which the Italians may reaſonably expect from addicting themſelves to a ſtudious life. An information of this kind will lead my Engliſh readers into ſuch parts of our cuſtoms, as no traveller of their nation, ſo far as I have obſerved, has yet taken notice.

In Italy when a young man is trained up to phyſic, he has it in his power to get his livelihood by it in a very ſhort time, if he will apply to it in ſuch a manner as to acquire any reputation. On his quitting the univerſity, which is generally done after ſeven years, and after having taken all his degrees, he goes to ſerve as a volunteer in ſome great hoſpital, or puts himſelf

himſelf to a kind of apprentiſhip with one of the moſt noted phyſicians in a capital town, that he may now learn the practice, as he is ſuppoſed to have already learned the theory of phyſic. The phyſicians of Italy viſit all their patients with their young pupils conſtantly at their heels, oblige them to inſpect minutely all the maladies that fall in their way, and take notice of the remedies they preſcribe.

This kind of life a young beginner generally follows, until an opportunity offers to be choſen phyſician to an hoſpital, or to go in the ſame capacity to ſome ſmall town or village, which is called *andare in condotta*. As ſoon as he hears of a vacancy in any provincial place that will ſuit his circumſtances, he applies either perſonally or by letter to the corporation of it, offers his ſervice, and produces his certificates of having had his degrees, ſerved his apprentiſhip, and lived as every honeſt man ought to live.

On occaſion of vacancies there are generally ſeveral competitors who ſtrive to fill the empty place. But the young phyſician who has acquired the beſt character both for ſkill in his profeſſion, and prudence in common life, has the beſt chance of ſucceeding in his application, and of being preferred to the other candidates. His ſucceſs however depends on the ſuffrages of the corporation; and the largeſt number of them is not always obtained by ſuperior merit. Partiality and chance will ſometimes interfere, and give a place to one that ought to have been given to another. But we are very ſure, on the other hand, that officiouſneſs avails but little in caſes of ſuch elections, and that places will never be procured by money, as we are ſtill perfect ſtrangers to the noble arts of bribing voters.

When the place is once obtained, the young phyſician keeps it until he hears of a better; and then he offers himſelf a candidate for that. By theſe means our provincial

provincial phyſicians ſhift from place to place, that is, from a ſmall condotta to a greater.

No patient in any provincial place is obliged to fee his phyſician for his attendance, as each corporation allows him a yearly ſalary. However almoſt all families, whether they have occaſion for him or not, ſend him ſome little preſent at eaſter and at chriſtmas, which conſiſts of a lamb or a kid, of hams, ſauſages, capons, game, oil, wine, corn, or the like. The pooreſt peaſant would be aſhamed not to ſend at leaſt a couple of fowls to his phyſician on the holidays.

This neceſſity of puſhing themſelves forward by mere dint of perſonal merit, and the liberty that people have of employing any phyſician in the neighbourhood, if they have no good opinion of their own, naturally creates much emulation amongſt neighbouring phyſicians, and makes the greateſt part of them apply very ſeriouſly to their buſineſs; ſo that it

is

is not rare to find ſome of them very ſkilful in their profeſſion even in the obſcureſt towns of Italy; and I was much ſurpriſed two years ago in a petty village of the Upper Montferrat, called Rivalta, to find one ſignor Bovio, a young phyſician, not only very ſkilful in the ſcience of healing, but alſo poſſeſſed of a large collection of the natural productions of that province made by himſelf, and eſpecially of petrifications ſcarce to be found even in the ampleſt muſeums. It is to that emulation we chiefly owe the works of our Borelli's, Bellini's, Malpighi's, Baglivi's, Torricelli's, Redi's, and many others, whoſe names are known to the phyſicians of this part of the world, as well as thoſe of Sydenham and Boerhaave.

If a village happens to be ſo ſmall as not afford a ſufficient ſalary, it is annexed to one, two, or more of the neighbouring; and their common phyſician in ſuch a caſe is enabled by them to keep a horſe, a mule, or a vehicle. It is likewiſe

wiſe the buſineſs of the corporation to provide a lodging for him whenever he is obliged to make any ſtay amongſt them, and be abſent a while from his uſual place of reſidence. If the place, on the contrary, is too large for one phyſician, the corporation has more than one ſalary to appoint, and more than one *condotta* to diſpoſe of.

The ſalaries, together with the regular preſents, in many villages and provincial towns that I have viſited, and where I have often made it a point to be particularly inquiſitive on this head, are equivalent, upon a medium, to a capitation of two ſhillings; and few are the *condotta's* that contain leſs than three hundred ſouls, as few are likewiſe thoſe that go beyond ſeven or eight hundred. So that our provincial phyſicians in the ſmalleſt places get about thirty or forty pounds a year, and ſeventy or eighty in the largeſt; which are ſufficient competencies, as there is no provincial place throughout Italy, where a middling

a middling family may not be decently maintained with the ſmalleſt of theſe ſums.

Yet all our phyſicians do not go *in condotta*. Some of them remain for many years in their apprentiſhips; act as ſubſtitutes to their principals; get patients for themſelves when they think it time to venture on their own bottoms, and ſet up in capital towns, where ſome of them have got very deſirable fortunes.

Whether this method of proceeding with regard to the practice of phyſic be preferable to that uſed in England I will not venture to determine. It may perhaps be leſs lucrative to ſome of the profeſſors of medicine. But it ſeems to me more uſeful to the people; as they are in Italy much more generally, and even to the loweſt, accommodated with the aid of phyſicians regularly bred, than the people in England.

The young men who apply to ſurgery, get through the world exactly after the

manner of phyſicians. And as for the apothecaries, any body that chuſes may ſet up for one, after having undergone proper examinations. But the phyſicians in every place of their reſidence are obliged to viſit once a year at leaſt the apothecaries' ſhops, and have power to deſtroy all their decayed drugs and bad medicines. And here I muſt not omit to ſay, that within my memory the number of apothecaries is conſiderably decreaſed in Italy; and I was credibly informed in my late ramble there, that, in Florence only, more than twenty of them were in leſs than three years obliged to leave off trade, as our phyſicians are generally become averſe to frequent preſcriptions, and as our apothecaries are not allowed to play the phyſicians, as they commonly do in England.

With regard to thoſe who apply to the ſtudy of the laws, they are more dependant on government than the phyſicians, ſurgeons, or apothecaries; for, when the government

government is appriſed of their being properly qualified from the univerſities, they are ſent as *podeſtà's* or *judges* in different places about the provinces. There a young lawyer adminiſters both civil and criminal juſtice in caſes of no great moment; but in caſes of importance people muſt reſort to higher tribunals.

When a young *podeſtà* has thus adminiſtered juſtice for three years, a perſon with the title of *ſindico* (or *ſindaco*, as the Tuſcans pronounce it) is ſent to make the tour of all the *podeſteria's*, that is, of all the places where the podeſtà's reſide. Public notice is then given in each reſpective place to the inhabitants of the arrival of the *ſindico*, and every body without exception is at liberty to lay before him in writing any complaint againſt the *podeſtà*. Theſe complaints are immediately tranſmitted by the *ſindico* to the higheſt magiſtrate in the ſtate, and by him examined, or given to deputies to examine. If they are found trifling or ill-grounded,

they are difregarded; and, if juſt, redreſſed. But it will not be difficult to gueſs, that a *podeſtà* has no great chance of being promoted to a more lucrative *podeſteria* if it appears by any complaint, that he has not adminiſtered juſtice with a ſteady balance. If he has, he is ſent to a more profitable place for another triennium, and ſo on; nor is any *podeſtà* ever kept more than three years in the ſame place, that he may not (I ſuppoſe) contract very ſtrong attachments to particular people, and run into any danger of partiality.

Beſides applying to the *podeſteria's*, the young ſtudents in law take up the profeſſion of an advocate in great towns, and have clients pretty much upon the plan of the counſellors of England. In this way of buſineſs they generally fare, as in England, according to their ſeveral proportions of knowledge and eloquence, of dexterity or artfulneſs: and from this claſs, as well as from that of the *podeſtà's*, the chief magiſtrates and ſuperior judges

are

are choſen by government, when it is thought proper.

Mr. Sharp in the very beginning of his work ſets out, foppiſhly enough, for a deep critic in the Venetian dialect, and ſpeaks of the advocates of Venice: yet he does not venture to give his opinion with regard to their powers in oratory. He only deſcribes them in their acts of peroration, and is very right when he ſays, that their voices are diſcord, their geſticulations approaching to thoſe of madmen, and their general way of pleading noiſy and unciviliſed.

The Venetians value themſelves much on their forcible eloquence, and think that their advocates are the only legitimate offspring of the ancient Roman orators, who certainly muſt have been very noiſy ſpeakers and great geſticulators, as they had often occaſion to ſpeak to multitudes more eaſily convinced by a ſtrong tone of voice, and by violent motions of arms and hands, than by argument and reaſon.

But as the Venetian advocates have in every cauſe only forty judges at moſt to convince, and as their debates are carried on in the halls of St. Mark's palace, and not in vaſt or open places, (as was often the caſe with the Romans) their ſtamping, their contorſions, and their vociferations always gave me great offence, and made me think, that their bluſtering manner of pleading was diſadvantageous to their clients, as the beſt reaſons offered in their ſupport muſt in ſome meaſure be drowned in their own infernal clamour and agitations. Yet the Venetian noblemen who ſit as judges, are ſo uſed to it, that they can very well ſeparate their ſolid reaſons from their roaring: and in the many years that I have lived in Venice I never had occaſion to be much diſſatisfied at any of their deciſions in any cauſe, and ſcarcely ever heard any perſon complaining of their final ſentences. But ſtill the Venetian advocates would do better in my my opinion, to conform to the

reſt

reſt of Italy, and plead with a little more compoſure; with leſs bawling and brawling.

What our government do with regard to the ſtudents in law, our biſhops do with regard to the ſtudents in divinity. Theſe are ſent as curates, rectors, or vicars from the capital towns to the villages or ſmall towns in their diſtricts as ſoon as they have got the order of prieſthood. But they are not removed triennially as the *podeſtà's*. They ſucceed, like the phyſicians, to the vacancies of curacies, rectories, and vicarages as ſoon as they offer; and he who is thought the beſt qualified, is generally preferred to the other candidates by the electors appointed by the biſhop.

The reader however is not to ſuppoſe theſe cuſtoms univerſal throughout Italy. The country being divided into many ſovereignties of different forms, the laws and cuſtoms muſt of conſequence differ in many places. Yet this is, in the main,

the plan that each of them follows with regard to phyſicians, lawyers, and divines. To point out each particular way of providing for theſe three claſſes of people throughout our ſeveral ſovereignties would prove tedious as well as endleſs.

Beſides theſe roads that the ſtudious of Italy have to employment and preferment, and through which they may attain to the higheſt poſts both in church and ſtate, the univerſities are likewiſe open to them; and to get profeſſorſhips generally depends upon their reputation for knowledge. The ſalaries annexed to the profeſſorſhips are partly paid out of ſome monies aſſigned to the univerſities by government, and partly ariſe from perquiſites and fees belonging to the univerſities themſelves. Few of our univerſities have lands and funds of their own as thoſe of Oxford and Cambridge.

When a man is choſen profeſſor, he has nothing to do but to continue reading his lectures, and increaſe in knowledge and credit,

credit, and he may be ſure, at the very worſt, of ending his days in comfortable circumſtances if he reaches to old age, becauſe his ſalary is generally augmented a little every ſeven years. Then after fourteen years ſervice he may if he chuſes quit the univerſity, and retire upon half pay, and not ſeldom upon a whole one for life, if he has rendered himſelf uſeful and conſpicuous.

The diviſion of Italy into many ſovereignties renders the inhabitants of different parts near as much ſtrangers to one another as if they were the inhabitants of ſo many iſlands, becauſe they ſeldom travel into one another's country. This hinders the growth of our capital towns, that cannot all be ſwallowed into one, as it is the caſe in France and England.

A country ſo conſtituted cannot afford any great means of pecuniary advantages to ſuch as devote their lives to thoſe kinds of literature which are independent of the

three

three profeſſions. Hence the man who applies to poetry, hiſtory, aſtronomy, botany, and other branches of literature of no immediate neceſſity, cannot raiſe contributions from the public, as is the caſe in London and in Paris. When an Italian acquires knowledge without a view towards the univerſity, he does it merely for the ſake of doing ſomething, and can ſcarce have any other reward than the conſciouſneſs and ſatisfaction of doing well. The trade of writing books is by no means a profitable trade in Italy, and few are thoſe among us that get any thing by it. Half a dozen mercenary writers make a ſmall penny in Venice with ſome tranſlation from the French or the Engliſh; and I remember one Fabricio, a man of very good parts, who had a little more than three ſhillings a ſheet for tranſlating Chamber's dictionary, and Middleton's life of Cicero. This is almoſt the only way of getting a few ducats that lies open to our volunteers in literature; and

a ſhort

a ſhort and narrow way it is. Yet the Italians in general are very eager after fame; and every learned foreigner knows, that ever ſince the firſt revival of literature in Europe, they have conſtantly cultivated all ſorts of ſciences with very good ſucceſs, and produced a conſiderable number of good books on every ſubject; for which they are perhaps to be praiſed above the ſtudious of other nations, when it is conſidered that all their mental productions are given gratis. Morgagni, who has wrote ſo much, and whoſe works are in the hands of every good phyſician and anatomiſt through Europe, never got one hundred pounds from the bookſellers, though many bookſellers be grown rich by his works. Metaſtaſio and Carlo Gozzi are the only two Italian writers who might have made money of their literary labours, as their works have the great advantage of being alike pleaſing to the learned and the ignorant. But Metaſtaſio made a preſent of his to one Bettinelli,

nelli, a bookſeller of Venice, who got more than ten thouſand Engliſh pounds by publiſhing above thirty editions of them, which were ſold with aſtoniſhing rapidity all over Italy; and Gozzi gave his, as I ſaid, to an actreſs, who has not yet thought proper to make them public, and which would ſell in my opinion quite as well and as faſt as Metaſtaſio's. As to Goldoni and Chiari, they ſcarcely got from the managers of the Venetian theatres ten pounds for each of their plays when they both were at the zenith of their undeſerved popularity; and their profits from the printing of them were ſtill a great deal ſmaller, not only becauſe it is the general cuſtom for our authors to make a preſent of their works to bookſellers, who in return ſcarcely give a few copies of their books when printed; but likewiſe becauſe their plays began to be ſeverely cenſured as ſoon as ſtripped of the gaudy ornaments of the ſcene. Our learned ſtare when they are told, that in

England

England there are numerous writers who get their bread by their productions only, and that ſome amongſt them can earn from bookſellers a thouſand ſequeens a year if they are laborious; or that a ſingle play in London, and in Paris too, will ſometimes produce as much to its author. They can ſcarcely be brought to believe ſuch wonders, as not one in a hundred of them ever got with his quill as much in a twelvemonth, as the worſt hackney-ſcribler in London can get in a week.

But the impoſſibility of making money by their literary labours, is not the only diſadvantage that attends the learned of Italy. They are likewiſe to encounter many difficulties in the publication of their works. Nothing is printed in Italy without being firſt licenced by two, and ſometimes more reviſors appointed by the civil and the eccleſiaſtical government. Theſe are to peruſe every manuſcript intended for the preſs; and ſometimes their ſcrupulouſneſs and timidity, ſometimes their

vanity

vanity or ill-temper, and ſometimes their ignorance and inſufficience raiſe ſo many objections, that a poor author is often made quite ſick with his own productions. Yet many new books * are conti-

* To give an imperfect idea of our eagerneſs after fame, I beg the reader's leave to ſubjoin a liſt I have lately received from Italy of the works produced within theſe few years by the authors of Breſcia only; and yet Breſcia is a town not to be compared with Rome, Naples, and other Italian cities in point of literature.

Paolo Gagliardi, dead in 1761. His works. *Parere intorno allo antico Stato de' Genomani*, &c. Padua, 1724. *Vita di Giovanni Cinelli.* Roveredo, 1736. Beſides two fine editions of thoſe fathers who were natives of Breſcia, ſome Latin and Italian orations, and ſome tranſlations from the Greek and Latin.

Ramiro Rampinelli, an Olivetan monk, dead in the year 1759. His works. *Lectiones Opticæ*, Brixiæ, 1760. See a farther account of this mathematician in Signora Agneſi's famous book intitled *Inſtitutiones Analiticæ.*

Fra Fortunato da Breſcia, a Franciſcan friar, dead in 1754. *Geometriæ Elementa*, Brixiæ, 1734. *Philoſophia Senſuum*, 2 vol. 4to. Brixiæ, 1735. *Elementa mathematica*, 4 vol. 1737, and many other works, ſome of which have undergone ſeveral editions.

Conte Giambattiſta Suardi, dead in 1766. *Nuovi Iſtrumenti per la deſcrizione di diverſe curve antiche e moderne*,

nually printing all over Italy, and in the number there is always ſome that has merit. This trial is very troubleſome, I own; and ſhould ſuch a cuſtom be intro-

moderne, Breſcia 1764; with other works mathematical and mechanical.

Giambattiſta Scarella, a Teatine friar. *Phyſica generalis methodo mathematico tractata*, 4 vol. Brixiæ, 1754, uſque 1757. *De magnete*, 2 vol. 4to, Brixiæ, 1759. *Elementa logicæ, ontologiæ*, &c. 4 vol. Brixiæ, 1763. *Commentarii* XII. *De rebus ad ſcientiam naturalem pertinentibus*, 1 vol. 4to, 1766.

Conte Giammaria Mazzuchelli, dead in 1765. *Notizie Storiche intorno ad Archimede*, Breſcia, 1737. *Vita di Pierro Aretino*, Padova, 1741. *Vita di Jacopo Bonfadio*, Breſcia, 1766. This nobleman has likewiſe wrote an account *of Italian writers* in ſeventeen vol. fol. ſix of which only are printed; and ſeveral other works.

Conte Franceſco Roncalli, living. *De acquis Brixianis*, 1 vol. 4to. *Europæ medicina*, 1 vol. fol. *Hiſtoria morborum*, 1 vol. fol. *Epiſtolæ et diplomata*, 1 vol. fol. beſides many other leſs voluminous works.

Conte Pierantonio Gaetani, living. *Dialogo delle antiche Saltagioni. De magia et cabala.—De ſybillis.—Muſeum Mazzuchellianum, ſeu numiſmata virorum doctrina preſtantium*, Venetiis, 1761, 2 vol. fol.

Giambattiſta Almici, living. *Il dritto della natura e delle genti di Puffendorfio, rettificato, accreſciuto, ed illuſtrato*

duced in England, I believe very few authors would have phlegm enough to submit to it. But long uſe has reconciled the Italians to it, and few are our printers

trato. Venezia, 1757, 4 vol. 4to. *Oſſervazioni critiche ſopra lo ſpirito* d'Elvezio.—*De jure naturæ*; and other things.

Antonio Brognoli, living. *Il pregiudizio*, poema, Breſcia, 1766. Several orations and poetical pieces.

Giambattiſta Rodella, a clergyman, living. *Vita del conte Giambattiſta Mazzuchelli*, Breſcia, 1766. This Rodella is the continuator of the above-mentioned account *of Italian writers.*

Giammaria Biemi, living. *Storia Breſciana*, 11 vol. 4to.—*Vita di Giorgio Iſtrioto*, and other works.

Carlo Doneda, living. *Della Zeccha e Monete di Breſcia*, Breſcia, 1755.

Conte Durante Duranti, living. *Rime.* Breſcia, 1755.

Abbate Luchi, a monk, living. *De monaſterio Leonenſi*, Rome, 1765.

Bonaventura Luchi, living. *De nuditate Protoplaſtorum et De ſerpente tentatore*, Patavii, 1755; with other works.

Pietro Barzani, living. *Vita del Panagioti da Sinope*, in Greek and Italian, Breſcia, 1760.

Giulio Baitelli and *Franceſco Piazzoni*, both living, together with *Carlo Scarella*, who died but lately, have wrote

who will dare the law, and print any book ſecretly.

An Engliſh author in reading this account, will bleſs himſelf that he was not

wrote many things much admired by learned antiquarians in the collection of the ſeveral works publiſhed *about the ancient Cenomani.*

Fra Gaudenzio da Breſcia, a capuchin friar, living. *Iſtituzioni oratorie*, Breſcia, 1760.

Vintore da Coccaglio, living. *Ricerca ſiſtematica ſul teſto e ſulla mente di San Proſpero d' Acquitania nel ſuo poema contra gl' ingrati*, 1 vol. 4to. *Lo ſpirito filoſofico, teologico, e aſcettico di San Proſpero d' Aquitania ne' ſuoi epigrammi.* Breſcia, 1761. 1 vol. 4to.

Giambattiſta Chiaramonti, living. *Del paterno impero degli antichi Romani—Diſcorſo ſopra la felicitá—Ragionamento interno agli epiſtolari degli uomini illuſtri.—Di alcune verità fondamentali del gius di natura e della morale filoſofia.—Sopra lo ſtato antico e preſente della Valcamonica.—Delle accademie letterarie Breſciane.—Del commercio.—Vita del cavalier Vannetti.—Elogi del padre Giampietro Bergantini.—E del conte Gianandrea Giovanelli.* All the above works, with ſome others, were ſeverally printed from 1759 to 1767.

To this liſt I might add ſome other names, but this ſpecimen ſuffices to give, as I ſaid, ſome idea of the buſy ſpirit of my countrymen when conſidered as authors.

born in that country of ſlavery; and I give him joy that he is a free Briton. I wiſh no ill to the liberty of the Engliſh preſs; and every body who knows me perſonally, knows that I am a tolerable good Engliſhman, though born and bred in Italy. However, I cannot forget that at bottom I am ſtill an Italian; and I know the mettleſome temper of my dear countrymen ſo well, that I ſhould be very ſorry to ſee them enjoy this Engliſh privilege. Unleſs the whole frame of the government were adjuſted to this liberty, and of a piece with it, it could not fail of being miſchievous to the ſtate and to the ſatisfaction of private people, without encreaſing literature or knowledge in any proportion. Such a liberty would hardly contribute to the multiplication of their Metaſtaſio's and Gozzi's, of their Finetti's and Morgagni's. But I am quite clear on the other hand, that is would preſently degenerate into licentiouſneſs,

and

and the times of the obſcene Aretino's and the atheiſtical Bruno's be preſently revived. Every ſcribbling *Abatino* of Rome would then ſpeak in the moſt reviling terms of emperors and kings on their declaring a war or ſtriking a peace ſomewhat clashing with the intereſts of the Romans. A ragged *Birricchino* of Bologna would then beſmear with his blackeſt ink even the handſomeſt queens for their encouraging foreign manufacturers to ſettle in their dominions: and a ſtupid *Lazzarone* of Naples would then be lavish of the vileſt epithets on any little commonwealth for permitting their ſhip-wrights to build and ſell men of war to thoſe who have money enough to buy them. No public character would then find ſhelter againſt that deluge of outrageous ſatire which would flow from the Italian pens; and every private reputation would be at the mercy of every ſcoundrel that could rhyme. In the greateſt part of the Italian ſtates, very few individuals have

at preſent their digeſtion ſpoiled, or their ſleep interrupted, by the political meaſures adopted by government in their reſpective countries: but were our preſs to be ſet free, many an oilman of Lucca, many a wine-merchant of Empoli, and many a tallow-chandler of Modena would then pretend to be a good deal wiſer than ſecretaries of ſtate, and wonder at kings and queens for not picking them out of their ſhops, and bringing them to the higheſt employments. Sedition, defamation, profaneneſs, ribaldry, and other ſuch benefits would then quickly circulate through all our towns, villages, and hamlets. Irreligion would be ſubſtituted in a great meaſure to bigotry and ſuperſtition: the pope would be called antichriſt and mother church a whore. Such would be, amongſt others, the bleſſed effects of a free preſs in Italy, could we ever be indulged with it. But heaven avert we ſhould! It is ſaid that no body knows the pleaſures of madneſs but madmen.

The

The ſame may be juſtly ſaid of the peculiar advantages of ſlavery: they are not to be conceived but by ſlaves. And if it is true that learning cannot flouriſh but in the ſunſhine of liberty, and if it is impoſſible, without a freedom of the preſs, ever to have in Italy ſuch writers as the Johnſons and the Warburtons of England, let Italy never have any, as long as their Alps and Apennines will ſtand: provided that on the other hand ſhe never be ornamented by—— *Cætera deſunt.*

CHAP. XV.

I Muſt not end my account of Italian literature without taking ſome notice of thoſe ſocieties of ſtudious men, which go amongſt us by the name of academies, and are to be found even in the ſmalleſt of our towns.

Soon after the revival of learning ſeveral of theſe ſocieties were formed in many parts of Italy, and eſpecially in Florence; a city deſervedly celebrated for having been during the whole ſixteenth century ſo eminent a ſeat of literature, as to be ſcarcely equalled by any other in Europe. Florence was in that century called the Athens of Italy.

Amongſt the ſeveral academies formed in that capital, that which is called *Della Cruſca*, ſoon rendered itſelf conſpicuous above all others.

The

The members of this academy, towards the end of the ſixteenth century, took their own language into conſideration; and the eſteem in which Italian was then held throughout Europe, made them think it neceſſary to give the learned world an Italian dictionary.

Whatever progreſs lexicography may have made in all poliſhed countries ſince that time, the compiling of a dictionary muſt then have been thought highly difficult and laborious, as there was not then extant any work that could direct their undertaking, and point out a proper method of compilation. Yet the academicians were not diſmayed by the vaſt and dreary proſpect. They parcelled out the intended work amongſt the ableſt of their fraternity, who made copious extracts of words from the books wrote in the three preceding ages; ranged them in alphabetical order; defined each word with much preciſion; marked their greater or leſs antiquity; diſtinguiſhed the poetical

from the common, and the elegant from the vulgar; pointed out their various meanings; illuſtrated even the leaſt important particles with ſufficient examples; gave the equivalent of each word in Greek and Latin; and in the ſpace of about thirty years publiſhed the reſult of their labours by means of the preſs. Thus was the road made ſmooth to Furetiere and Johnſon.

Such a performance on its firſt appearance was looked upon as a valuable acquiſition to literature, and received by the learned with great and deſerved applauſe. However it could not yet be conſidered as quite complete. Subſequent academicians now, that the firſt and greater encumbrances were in a good meaſure removed, retouched it in numberleſs places, and reprinted it ſeveral times both in the laſt and in the preſent age, carefully corrected and remarkably enlarged upon every new publication.

Their repeated diligence brought at laſt the Italian dictionary to ſuch a degree of copiouſneſs,

copiouſneſs, that every future edition will, in my opinion, ſtand rather in need of retrenchments than of additions.

Of the many members of the academy who were employed in the forming of this important and neceſſary work, I will only mention Michelangelo Buonarroti, the author of the *Tancia**, already mentioned.

This ingenious poet ſaw the academicians much perplexed for want of examples out of printed books to authoriſe a claſs of words, which, though frequently occurring in converſation, are but ſeldom written. I mean thoſe peculiar and technical words uſed by thoſe who exert the meaneſt crafts, and deal in the loweſt neccſſaries of life.

To remove this difficulty Buonarroti compoſed a dramatic work of a very ſingular kind. This was a comedy which conſiſted of five pieces, each of five acts, or rather a comedy of five and twenty

* See page 182.

acts.

acts. His place of action he made a fair, or mart; and accordingly intitled it *Le Fiera*. A ſimple plan, but far from contemptible, as it gave him room to introduce all ſorts of people on the ſcene.

This odd drama was exhibited in Florence at the expence of the ſovereign for five nights ſucceſſively; that is, five acts, or one of the five comedies a night, and met with much applauſe. The great number of peculiar and technical words which Buonarroti brought into a ſmall compaſs by means of this poetical expedient, is ſcarcely conceivable: and as his language is pure Tuſcan, you may imagine that the academicians made good uſe of it in their dictionary.

Beſides giving us this bulky production, the academicians encreaſed the ſtock of Italian literature with many other works, all tending to the greater embelliſhment and perfection of their tongue. Amongſt theſe, the moſt noted are many volumes intitled *Proſe Fiorentine*, and ſome ſevere

ſtrictures upon Taſſo's poem of the delivery of Jeruſalem. But neither of theſe two works bear any great proportion in point of learning and of uſe to their dictionary. The *Proſe Fiorentine* were dictated by too bigotted an affection to the dialect of their metropolis, which they long endeavoured to force upon all Italy as the only language to be employed either in ſpeech or in books. And as to their criticiſms on Taſſo's Jeruſalem, thoſe that were employed by the academy to examine whether it was to be admitted amongſt their models of good language, betrayed too great a narrowneſs of mind in trying the language of ſuch a poem by the ſtandard of the Florentine dialect, and were juſtly taxed of overnicety and pedantry for having inſiſted with too much vehemence upon little imperfections with regard to grammar and ſyntax, paſſing over thoſe blazes of genius which illuminate every one of his canto's. However, if their admiration of Arioſto's Orlando

Orlando rendered them unjuſt in many reſpects to Taſſo's Jeruſalem, time in their default has at laſt ſettled the public judgment with regard to both our epic poets; and the magnificence of Taſſo's numbers and diction, together with his great conformity to epic rules, will for ever overballance Arioſto's ſuperior gracefulneſs and rapidity of expreſſion, and greater fertility of invention. The Jeruſalem will always be the moſt ſtriking, and the Orlando the moſt pleaſing of the two poems.

But this academy, which conſiſted once of many men highly eminent in ſeveral parts of literature, is at preſent much upon the decline, becauſe all that could be ſaid about Italian language has been ſaid over and over. Then the honour of admittance amongſt its members is not now ſo eagerly courted as it was once, when perſonal merit was the only means to obtain it. It is therefore probable that the total annihilation of the academy is approaching:

approaching: but ſuch is the natural courſe of human things! They begin in weakneſs and imperfection: acquire ſtrength by ſmall degrees, and laſt a while in vigorous maturity: then by ſmall degrees grow weak and imperfect again, until an end is put to their exiſtence by the irreſiſtible effects of time.

Next to the academy *Della Cruſca*, that of the *Arcadia Romana* roſe in repute. The buſineſs of this Arcadia was to correct, encreaſe, and beautify our poetry, as that of the Cruſca to purify, illuſtrate, and fix our language.

The Arcadian life, as fabulous hiſtory repreſents it, was altogether innocent and ſimple. The inhabitants of that country lived on the mere products of their lands and flocks, and cultivated only thoſe arts that are conducive to rural elegance and guiltleſs pleaſure.

Upon this foundation Jacopo Sannazzaro, who lived in the beginning of the ſixteenth century, compoſed in Italian a paſtoral

paſtoral romance intitled *L'Arcadia*, which in Italy did him no leſs honour than his Latin poem *De Partu Virginis*, and out of Italy procured him ſeveral imitators, amongſt whom the celebrated Sir Philip Sidney did not diſdain to be numbered.

Sanazzaro's Arcadia is in proſe, intermixed with eclogues in verſe; and both his proſe and his eclogues are ſo crouded with paſtoral images and ſentiments, that one would think the ſubject quite exauſted. Yet the Italians did not think ſo towards the middle of the laſt age, when ſome few verſe-mongers of Rome took it into their heads again to cultivate that imaginary rural region.

If we credit Mario Morei, who publiſhed lately the hiſtory of this academy*, thoſe who firſt clubbed together in order to form it, were no more than *thirteen*,

* Morei's book is intitled MEMORIE *iſtoriche dell' adunanza degli Arcadi. In Roma*, 1761, *in* 8vo. A poor book upon the whole.

whoſe

whoſe names Morei has thought proper to preſerve. But ſuch is the fondneſs of the Italians for verſe and rhyme, that it ſoon conſiſted of as many thouſands.

Theſe thirteen people joined in a friendly body, to which they gave the affected title of *Arcadia Romana*; and amongſt the few laws, written for them in very elegant Latin by the learned Vincenzo Gravina, there was one, by which it was enacted, that no perſon ſhould be admitted into this ſociety without firſt aſſuming a paſtoral name.

It is impoſſible to conceive the eagerneſs with which this whimſical ſcheme of turning all ſorts of men into imaginary ſhepherds was adopted both in Rome and out of Rome; and how the inflammable imaginations of my countrymen were fired by it! The very pope then reigning, with many cardinals and principal monſignori's ſuffered themſelves to be perſuaded, that this poetical eſtabliſhment would prove infinitely

infinitely advantageous to literature in general, and poetry in particular; nor did they diſdain to be liſted in the catalogue of theſe Arcadian ſwains, befriending their union with ſeveral privileges, aſſigning them a place to hold their aſſemblies in, and attending frequently at their meetings.

The fame of this new academy was ſoon ſpread all over Italy, and the rural compoſitions produced on their firſt outſet by the Arcadians, met with ſo great and general a favour with a nation always eager after every novelty, eſpecially poetical novelty, that all became ambitious of being admitted into ſuch an academy. But as this wiſh could not inſtantly be gratified, no leſs than *fifty-eight* towns of Italy, according to Morei's account, reſolved on a ſudden to have like academies of their own, which they unanimouſly called *colonies of the Roman Arcadia.*

The madneſs of paſtoral became now univerſal. Every body who had the leaſt knack

knack for poetry, was metamorphoſed into a ſhepherd, and fell directly upon compoſing ruſtic ſonnets, eclogues, ydylliums, and bucolics. Nothing was heard from the foot of the Alps to the farthermoſt end of Calabria, but deſcriptions of purling ſtreams rolling gently along flowery meadows ſituated by the ſides of verdant hills ſhaded by ſpreading trees, among whoſe leafy branches the ſad Progne with her melancholy ſiſter Philomela warbled their chaſte loves, or murmured their doleful lamentations.

Rome being thus transformed by a poetical magic into a province of Greece, ſaw her capital turned to a cottage, the favourite habitation of Pan and Vertumnus; and the charming Flora did not ſcruple to walk hand in hand with the lovely Pomona about the Vatican and Saint Peter. No body was to be found in the ſtreets but coy nymphs and frolickſome ſatyrs, or amorous fawns and buxom dryads. No body was now called by his

chriſtian or family-name: all our Antonio's, Franceſco's, and Bartolommeo's were turned into Ergaſto's, Dameta's, and Silvano's: and as neither the Arcadia nor her colonies refuſed admittance to the other ſex, it may eaſily be gueſſed that every fair would now be a handſome nymph or an artleſs ſhepherdeſs, and that our Maria's, Orſola's, and Margherita's became on a ſudden all Egle's, Licori's and Glicera's. None of our ciciſbeo's dared now to peep out of his hut, but with a hook in one hand, and a flute in the other.

I ſhall not take upon me to enumerate the advantages that Italian poetry has received from our fanciful Arcadians and their coloniſts. To ſay, that in the vaſt number none reached at excellence, would be both incredible and unjuſt. Some of them really wrote pieces that are pleaſing enough in their kind. But what is excellence in paſtorals? No great matter in my opinion. The imagery and ſentiments ſuitable

ſuitable to this ſpecies of poetry cannot be drawn from any ſyſtem of life that ever was lived by any people, as no country is to be found upon genuine records, whoſe inhabitants joined politeneſs to ſimplicity, and innocence to knowledge. Some amongſt our favourers of paſtoral poetry have been ſo abſurd as to pretend, that the wandering Arabs, and even many of the Tartar nations, have lived, and actually live ſuch a life, becauſe they feed chiefly upon the product of their flocks and herds, and know ſo much of arts and ſciences as to claim a wide difference from the ſavages of Africa and America. But are the manners of the Arabs and Tartars really thoſe of poetical ſhepherds? Their robberies and continual incurſions upon their neighbours, beſides the general caſt of their manners, would make but a very indifferent figure in paſtoral poetry, which excludes all ideas of violence and rapine, or permits it only to wolves and foxes! Paſtoral life being then a mere

creature of poetical brains, and without any archetype in nature, muſt of courſe be uſeleſs for want of application: and whatever is uſeleſs cannot deſerve any great ſhare of our eſteem, be it ever ſo perfect in its kind. Our imaginary ſhepherds are therefore juſtly fallen into contempt, as it has been the caſe theſe many years. The Arcadian coloniſts are at laſt nearly annihilated throughout Italy; and the *Arcadia Romana* conſiſts now only of a few *Abatino's*, who ſtill perſiſt to meet ſometimes in order to recite their meagre verſes to each other; and they ſtill chuſe a *Cuſtode Generale*, or *Chief Herdſman*, whoſe moſt important buſineſs is to make a penny of his place; and this he chiefly effects by ſending Arcadian patents to the Engliſh travellers on their arrival at Rome: by which trick he aggregates their lordſhips and honours to the auguſt body of the Roman Arcadians. Thoſe patents are ſeldom refuſed, as they never coſt above nine or ten ſhillings given to the *Abatino's* who

who offer them gratis. By means of ſo ſmall an expence their lordſhips and honours may become, if they chuſe, directly and intimately acquainted with very ſkilful managers of love-intrigues, as a good many of our preſent Arcadians are far from being ſo ſimple and innocent as the ancient ones of Greece.

Beſides the poor remains of the Cruſca and the Arcadia, there are in Rome and in other of our towns other Academies compoſed of people who pretend to ingenuity in one thing or other. At Rome there is the *Accademia di San Luca*, in which none but painters, ſtatuaries, architects, and engravers are admitted, and it matters not of what country or religion they are. Theſe academicians have choſen for their patron the evangeliſt St. Luke, changed into a painter by tradition, though he be termed a phyſician in holy writ. Some of our ſearchers into ancient records pretend, that in the twelfth century there lived one *Maſtro Luca* of

Ceſena, (if I remember right the name of his native place) who would paint and carve nothing but Madona's, out of devotion to our bleſſed lady. They ſay that the Madona's of Loretto, Bologna, Caravaggio, Varallo, and many others in Italy, now very miraculous, owe their formation to this artiſt, whoſe ingenuity bore but little proportion to his piety. The chriſtian name of this *Maſtro Luca* was *Santo*. Hence aroſe the vulgar notion that thoſe Madona's were painted by *St. Luke*. Whatever truth there be in this ſcrap of erudition, this notion has ſpread ſo far and wide, that the famous *Neuſtra Señora del Pillár* actually worſhipped in Saragozza, and that ſtill more famous of *Monſerrate* in Catalonia, were likewiſe St. Luke's works in the opinion of the Spaniards. I beg Mr. Sharp's pardon for this ridiculous digreſſion in honour of our Madona's, and return ſtraight to our academies.

At

At Naples there is the *Ercolana*; and the buſineſs of its members is to explain as well as they can the pictures, ſtatues, inſcriptions, and other ſuch curioſities dug out of Herculaneum; and ſix large volumes of their explanations are already publiſhed under the patronage of the preſent king of Spain, who has ordered them to be diſtributed as preſents to perſons of diſtinction as faſt as they come out of the preſs.

At Cortona there is the *Accademia Etruſca* for the illuſtration of the Etruſcan antiquities which are diſcovered in Tuſcany and in the neighbouring provinces from time to time; and I hear that monſignor Mario Guarnacci, (a very learned prelate who lives at Volterra, and a member of that academy) is going to publiſh a new, and very conſiderable collection of ſuch antiquities.

At Florence, about Galileo's time, was inſtituted the *Accademia del Cimento*, that

is, *of experimental philoſophy*. It is pity that it did not laſt long, and that its members, amongſt whom were Bellini, Borelli, Torricelli, Redi, and other famous men, printed but few of their *Experiments*. However it has been lately ſucceeded by the *Accademia d'Agricoltura*, which I hope will prove near as uſeful, if not more ſo. And if I am not miſtaken, there is likewiſe another called *La Società Colombaria*, whoſe members apply to natural philoſophy, and moſt particularly to botany.

At Venice there is one, the appellation of which I cannot now recollect; but its inſtitution ſeems to me very laudable. The members of it are all young lawyers, who debate before-hand in their meetings thoſe cauſes, that are to be debated in their courts of judicature. Some of the members ſpeak for the plaintiffs, ſome for the defendants, and with as much earneſtneſs as if they were in the real preſence

of

of the judges. Thus they endeavour to qualify themſelves for the profeſſion which they intend to follow.

At Bologna there is the *Accademia de' Filarmonici*, in which none but profeſſors of muſic are admitted; and father Martini, who is looked upon in Italy as the moſt learned man in the ſcience of muſic that we ever had, is one of its principal members.

At Vicenza (Palladio's native country) there was an academy of architects; and I think it is not yet quite extinct. At Milan there is the *Accademia Milaneſe*, or *De' Trasformati*, which boaſts of many men ſkilful in various branches of literature. At Turin I am told there is now one patroniſed by the duke of Savoy, whoſe members apply to algebra, geometry, and all parts of mathematics. Amongſt them there is Lagrangia, a young gentleman; (lately called to Berlin by the king of Pruſſia) and I have heard that monſieur D'Alembert and other French mathematicians

ticians look upon this Lagrangia as the greateſt genius now known in Europe with regard to the ſcience that contemplates whatever is capable of being numbered or meaſured. But it would be too prolix to enumerate all our ſocieties *, whoſe chief aim is always the cultivation of ſome branch or other of ſcience or of art. I own that arts and ſciences are not generally forwarded much by our academies, as far as I can obſerve: yet they are upon the whole rather uſeful than pernicious, and anſwer the ends of ſociety if not of ſcience. They ſtand in the place of the clubs in England, which bring people together, and give them the means of becoming friends.

* For a fuller account of our academies ſee the firſt volume of a book intitled *Storia e ragione d' ogni poeſia*, written by Franceſco Saverio Quadrio, an ex-jeſuit, who died not long ago. In that volume are found the names of above five hundred academies, with a ſhort account of each.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

THE mentioning of St. Luke's academy in the foregoing chapter has put me in mind of thoſe arts which have obtained in England the appellation of *polite*, and go in Italy by that of *Arti del Diſegno*.

Theſe arts have in this age engaged a great deal of the attention of the Engliſh gentlemen, and they are certainly ſomewhat improved in this country. But I cannot join in the inſulting lamentation, which I have frequently heard here, that poor Italy is at preſent in ſuch a low condition with regard to thoſe arts, that nothing now is to be ſeen beyond the Alps, but what betrays the moſt ſhocking want of judgment, the greateſt poverty of taſte, and the moſt deplorable abſence of genius.

It is really diſmal to hear ſome pathetic Engliſh orators enlarge with the ſaddeſt emphaſis on the preſent degeneracy of Italy, and on the aſtoniſhing progreſs that painting, ſculpture, architecture, and engraving have lately made in this iſland, where they take the moſt gigantic ſtrides. Some of them declare that the late exhibition in Spring-gardens excels any thing that can be ſeen in Europe; ſome think that their countrymen will ſoon rival Greece and Rome in arts as they do in literature; and others aſſure with the moſt ſolem gravity, that a great number of the Britiſh artiſts would be looked upon as highly eminent, were they to quit this bleſſed iſle, and go to ſettle on the banks of the Arno, the Reno, and the Tyber.

This faſhion of crying down my unhappy countrymen on this particular, is now become little leſs than univerſal in this kingdom: and I am very ſorry that I am under an abſolute impoſſibility of producing

ducing any argument drawn from the polite arts themſelves againſt aſſertions like theſe; much leſs can I run into any parallel between ours and the Engliſh artiſts, as I cannot pretend to any profound ſkill in theſe matters, my ſtudies having lain another way.

However, as the Italians, according to the old notion, are a very revengeful people, I cannot here ſtifle my reſentment at this outrageous treatment; and muſt beg leave to tell theſe formidable connoiſſeurs, that the connoiſſeurs of Italy, (who have as good a title to judge as they have, and are no more to be ſuſpected of national partiality than the virtuoſo's of England) affirm, that the Engliſh painters, generally ſpeaking, are only able to copy nature in the lump, without any nice diſcrimination between her beauties and defects: that they do not greatly underſtand drawing, and apply more willingly to colouring, becauſe colouring infallibly catches the eyes of the ſtupid vulgar, and drawing

is in a great meaſure thrown away when the multitude is to judge: that whenever they attempt any thing hiſtorical, they know little how to groupe many figures together, becauſe their ſtudies are generally ſhortened by the deſire of getting money; and that they have ſo little of the poetical genius, that their invention is ſtill far from deſerving to be compared even to that of the French Pouſſins, Les Bruns, and Le Sueurs, or the Spaniſh Velaſques, Valdes, and Murillo's.

Some of the Italian artiſts indeed will allow very freely, that Italy cannot actually boaſt of ſo enchanting a pencil as Reynolds', and of ſo vivifying a chiſſel as Wilton's. They look with complacence on the queen of Cotes and the Eliſha of Weſt; and they praiſe the landſcapes of Barret and the horſes of Stubbs. They are even ſo impolitical as to ſay, that Stuart, Adams, and Chambers might add to the beauty of Florence and the magnificence of Rome. But for compoſition

in hiſtorical painting they are far from giving up the pre-eminence: and whilſt they admire the genius of the Engliſh architects in the ſmall works in which they have been engaged, they will not allow of their ſuperiority; and are far from entertaining that high opinion of the collective body of their pretended rivals, which the Engliſh connoiſſeurs ſeem to entertain.

Who is in the right, and who is in the wrong? The Italians or the Engliſh? Upon my word I cannot tell, becauſe, as I ſaid, I am not greatly converſant in theſe matters.

Declining therefore whatever the artiſts and connoiſſeurs might urge on each ſide of this knotty queſtion, I will here endeavour to aſſiſt the cauſe of my defenceleſs countrymen with ſome arguments independent of the rules and knowledge of the polite arts; and yet drawn from a few facts not entirely foreign to the purpoſe. Let then the judicious reader derive from them

them what inference he pleaſes. It would be unreaſonable that the Italians ſhould judge for themſelves. Other Nations ſhall judge for them.

You muſt know then, that in Madrid there is a royal palace which has been theſe thirty years a building, as I was credibly informed. It is a huge pile; and, for ſize, nothing either in England or in Italy can be compared to it *: and hugeneſs will always imply magnificence and awfulneſs. The architect was one Philip Juvara, an Italian, who, before he went to Spain, built the church of Superga on one of the higheſt hills near Turin, and ſome other grand edifices in Piedmont and in other parts of Italy. This Juvara has been dead a few years, but the building was carried on under the

* The Spaniards ſay that it has coſt twelve millions of *peſos duros*, that is, near three millions of pounds. In all probability they exaggerate; but ſtill it muſt have coſt a great deal.

direction

direction of one Sacchetti, another Italian, who was Juvara's pupil. Some of the cielings, walls, and ſtaircaſes of that royal palace in Madrid, were likewiſe painted by ſome of our modern Italians; that is, by Tiepolo, Corrado, Amiconi, and ſeveral others, whoſe names I cannot now recollect. Then at Aranjuez, a country-ſeat of the Spaniſh king, many parts of the houſe are painted by the ſame Italian artiſts who beautified the royal palace in Madrid; and in both places they have formed ſuch large and well-deſign'd groupes of figures, that have aſtoniſhed me as well as ſome others who ſeemed leſs ignorant of the polite arts than I am. And is it not probable that thoſe princes who employed ſo much time and went to a vaſt expence to conſtruct and adorn ſuch edifices, followed fame at leaſt in the choice of a country, from which they took their architects and painters?

Beſides theſe facts, this preſent king of Sardinia has a gallery in Turin, and ſome

country-houſes near Turin, which have all been built and painted by Alfieri, Bomonte, and other living artiſts of Italy; and thoſe pictures alſo are made up of ſuch multitudes of figures ſo ſkilfuly compoſed, drawn in ſuch various attitudes, and ſo clearly characteriſed, that if painting is to be compared with poetry, it is there in my poor opinion, and not in any of the Engliſh exhibitions, that the parallel will run between thoſe arts, and run both in the epic and the lyric.

I have often been told by people of veracity, that at Peterſburg, Vienna, Varſavia, Berlin, Stockholm, and in many other parts of Europe there are many Italian artiſts in the ſervice of many ſovereigns, who are by them employed in adorning their magnificent manſions. And will any one dare to ſay, that this concurrence of many ſovereigns in favour of our artiſts has riſen from Italian partiality? And what is there in the Engliſh exhibitions that muſt determine emperors and

czars,

czars, kings and margraves to ſend for architects and painters to England?

I have then heard it reported, that Battoni, Bottani, and Valle of Rome; Franceſchiello of Naples; Zocchi and Feretti of Florence; Lelli and the two brothers Gandolfi of Bologna; Fontebaſſo, Orſolini, Pitteri, and Canaletto of Venice; count Arnaldi * of Vicenza; Signaroli of Verona; Borra † of Turin; and a great many more of our painters, ſtatuaries, architects, and engravers, ſome ſtill living, and ſome but lately dead, are looked upon as tolerably ingenious in their ſeveral ways, even by ſome of the Engliſh lords

* Count Arnaldi, who is a man of great learning as well as an architect, has printed a book intitled IDEA *d'un* TEATRO *nelle principali ſue parti ſimile a' teatri antichi*. Vicenza 1762. In 4to.

† This Borra, who is now one of the architects of the king of Sardinia, is the ſame that was taken to Palmyra and Darbeck by the late Mr. Daukins, and the deſigner of thoſe monuments now ſo well known to the Engliſh.

and gentlemen who do us the honour to viſit our country. I will take it for granted, that theſe people are neither Raphaels nor Michelangelo's; neither Bramante's nor Bandinello's: but ſtill it is confidently aſſerted by the Italian connoiſſeurs, that their works do not betray any ſervile imitation; and that each of them has a manner of his own, which beſpeaks ſome power of invention. However, what ſignifies enumerating the names of modern Italian artiſts, whoſe works have never been ſeen by the greateſt part of my Engliſh readers? Let them all go for nothing, and let me remark only as a matter of leſs conſequence, upon which I do not inſiſt, that two pictures of Caſanova were but the other day univerſally allowed to be the beſt in the Pall-mall exhibition. And yet Caſanova is not univerſally allowed to be the greateſt painter of modern Italy.

Putting now theſe few facts together, and indulging a little partiality in favour

of

of Italy, will it be thought very impertinent if I adviſe ſome of your Engliſh connoiſſeurs and artiſts, to lower their tone a peg or two when they ſet about reviling the artiſts of Italy? They ought certainly to forbear treating them in a contemptuous manner, at leaſt until foreign ſovereigns ſend for Engliſh artiſts to erect their palaces and villa's, and to paint their cielings and ſtaircaſes.

But here ſome ſturdy Briton will be apt to anſwer me with an angry pſhaw, that the Engliſh artiſts would be very great fools to quit their country, and go upon any ſuch errand, as there is no money to be got any where but in England. Yet, if it happened that any emperor or king, czar or margrave, ſhould ever ſend for any of the Engliſh artiſts, I will tell them without laughing, that they need not be afraid to venture upon ſuch a jaunt, as I can aſſure them, that there are Louiſdores in France, doubloons in Spain, ducats in Germany, roubles in Muſcovy, and

ſequeens in Italy in ſuch quantities, as will certainly ſuffice to reward the greateſt abilities. Several Italian artiſts have made large fortunes by going to ſerve ſovereigns in diſtant countries; and it muſt certainly be an encouraging reflection to any Engliſh artiſt, that upon a parity of merit he will chance to meet with a parity of reward. And will it not be glorious, after a few years abſence, to come back home, and be able to boaſt, that one is grown rich out of England, and has contributed his mite at the ſame time to the greater renown of one's own country?

The arts in England certainly meet ſome encouragement; and ſome of your artiſts are actually growing as rich as cornfactors and ſtockjobbers: but this they only do in the way of dealing, which is a way of encouragement that will never be the beſt excitement of genius, as it never will leave it free to exert itſelf. An allowance even of a ſmall independance, which takes away from an artiſt all uneaſineſs about

his

his ſubſiſtence, is a much better encouragement than larger ſums paid for works that are beſpoken and preſcribed. Some ſuch penſions are paid even in modern Italy: Bomonte the painter and Alfieri the architect, have each five hundred Engliſh pounds a year from the king of Sardinia; and Vanvitelli had a good penſion from the pope, and a better from the preſent king of Spain when king of Naples, in conſequence of his having given the plans of the lazzaretto and mole at Ancona, and of the royal palace at Caſerta. Yet theſe encouragements are nothing equal to what they were in our golden age, when our ſovereigns and great people made it a point to patroniſe that kind of talents. The artiſts of Italy then, did not only get a few hundred pieces of gold every year, as the preſent Engliſh artiſts do, but they were rewarded with houſes and fields, decorated with ribbands and croſſes, and honoured with the inti-

mate friendſhip of grand-dukes and popes.

But let us grant for a moment, that the polite arts are as much upon the decline in Italy as they are getting forwards in England; ſtill you cannot deny, gentlemen, that you have not yet a ſchool which you can yet properly call your own? You muſt ſtill admit, that you are obliged to go to Italy to be taught, as it has been the caſe with your preſent beſt artiſts? You muſt ſtill ſubmit yourſelves to the direction of Italian maſters, whether excellent or middling? Still make your advantage of that kindneſs with which they point out to you the path that you are to follow if you will reach at any perfection in your profeſſion? And ſince this is the caſe, as it is, in a great meaſure at leaſt, why will you abuſe and run down thoſe, who far from proving invidious, endeavour your improvement whenever you give them an opportunity? Does this not look a little like beating your own

nurſe

nurſe becauſe ſhe is grown ſomewhat ſuperannuated; and like ſpitting in your mamma's face becauſe ſhe begins to doat a little?

But ſince I am about telling my mind upon this ſubject, let me inform my readers, that I have heard of ſome Engliſh young artiſts, who are ſo countenanced by the Italian nobility, as to be often employed by them, and rewarded for their labours in ſuch a manner as to be enabled to live and ſtudy there with more eaſe than they would otherwiſe do: nor can any body deny with juſtice to the Italians the merit of countenancing abilities wherever they find them, without the leaſt reluctance, without minding whether they are poſſeſſed by a native or a ſtranger, by an orthodox or an heterodox; and I am perſonally acquainted with an Engliſh painter of very diſtinguiſhed parts, lately returned from thence after an abſence of ten years from home, who has

aſſured

aſſured me, that he ſhall never ſufficiently praiſe my countrymen upon this head.

It is then a notorious fact that the academy of St. Luke has many times adjudged the firſt premiums to foreigners, Engliſh, Dutch, French, and Spaniards, without the leaſt ſhadow of national partiality. A ſucceſſion of ſtrangers, and many of them heretics (as our hot-headed divines call them) have ſhifted, and do ſtill ſhift in Italy, when furniſhed with a profeſſion and a little doſe of prudence; and inſtead of being envied, croſſed, and moleſted by national partiality, they have been, and are ſtill, aſſiſted and careſſed, eſteemed and employed. Nor does this Italian coſmopolitiſm and philanthropy extend ſingly to the polite artiſts who come to ſtudy or to live amongſt us. The cultivators of other profeſſions meet in Italy with the ſame treatment. To name only the profeſſors of muſic, an art in which we ſtill excel all other nations by the unanimous

nimous conſent of all Europe; have we not uſed the Spaniſh Terradella like our Venetian Galuppi, and the Saxon Haſſe like our Neapolitan Porpora? Handel himſelf was amongſt us when very young: and though far diſtant then from that perfection which put him after upon a par with our Pergoleſi's and our Scarlatti's, yet he lived honourably amongſt us, and had cauſe to remember with gratitude to the end of his days his Italian patrons as well as his Italian maſters. Many natives of other countries have lived very well, and even raiſed conſiderable fortunes in ſeveral parts of Italy, both in the military and the political ſervice of our different ſtates; and I have myſelf perſonally known an Engliſh governor of Nice in Provence, and a Scotch governor of Caſal in Monferrat. None of our commercial towns are ſhut to the merchants of any nation, and rendered difficult of acceſs by double duties of cuſtom-houſes and other re-

ſtraints

ſtraints on foreigners. At Venice, Leghorn, Ancona, Genoa, Naples, and other places, there are actually many ſtrangers, Engliſh eſpecially, who trade with as full a freedom as if they were born amongſt us; and they often retire to their own countries with the fortunes they have accumulated, without raiſing the leaſt murmur, and without receiving the leaſt moleſtation. Theſe, Mr. Sharp, theſe were the manners and cuſtoms of Italy which you had to deſcribe; and here you had an argument to expatiate upon, much more worthy of your pen than the dimenſions of our theatres, and the lemonades of our ladies. But, without ſaying any thing invidious of the Engliſh, of whoſe noble qualities I have ever been one of the moſt ſanguine admirers, could I not aſk this mighty cenſor whether ſtrangers are ſo well uſed in England as they are in Italy? Whether the laws of his country are ſo hoſpitable as thoſe of mine? Yet Italy is

a land ſwarming with revengeful murderers, and England is full of people who boaſt of good-nature exclusive of all other nations, as I have already obſerved.

But I muſt beg the reader's pardon for this ſecond digreſſion, perhaps a little too long and too warm. Yet to make him amends for my indiſcretion, I will now come ſtreight to the concluſion of the little I had to offer on the ſubject of the polite arts, and will only add, that though theſe arts be at preſent in a moſt promiſing condition in England, and much upon the decline in Italy, yet the Engliſh are ſtill far from being what the Italians have been. The names of the great men mentioned by Vertue and Walpole in the volumes printed at Strawberry-hill, will be for ever little names when compared to thoſe mentioned by Vaſari and Borghini; nor have yet the Italians any urgent need to run abroad for improvement, as long as they can boaſt to have

amongſt

amongſt them their Corrado's, Signaroli's, Vanvitelli's, and Piraneſi's, and as long as they can ſpare for England their Angelica's, Cipriani's, Bartolozzi's, and Zuccarelli's.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

IT is very poſſible I may be miſtaken in ſuppoſing, that among the numerous readers of this book there will be many of the fair ſex: But I find ſomething ſo delightful in this hope, that I readily admit it: my imagination even repreſents them as anxiouſly expecting from a native of Italy, who has the preſumption to adreſs them in their native tongue, a full account of the preſent ſtate of muſic in that muſical country; as wiſhing for the ampleſt information concerning the notions and management of our ladies with regard to this great ſource of female amuſement; and as longing to hear me expatiate on the powers of thoſe amongſt our ſweet ſongſters, who have not yet bleſſed the Haymarket with their appearance,

ance, and thrown them into ecſtacies with their *Caro's* and their *Addio's*.

I heartily wiſh it was in my power to give them full ſatisfaction upon this point. But unfortunately I am very much a ſtranger to the tranſactions of the muſical world; and my ſkill in harmony is ſo ſmall, that it never went beyond the roaring of a Venetian ballad when a flaſk of Montepuliano has gone ſeveral rounds; and my love of opera's and burletta's, far from being of the enthuſiaſtic kind, never hindered me from building the moſt magnificent Spaniſh caſtles while Egiziello was melting multitudes with ſkilful ſhakes and learned cadences; and often have I been very ſeriouſly meditating on the badneſs of my neighbour's ſnuff, while Careſtini with a prodigious *meſſa di voce* was gradually pumping up the admiration of two hundred Italian gentildonna's.

I muſt therefore in this my ſcantineſs of knowledge of theſe important matters, and to my no ſmall mortification, ſay to the

the Engliſh ladies what Arioſto ſaid to thoſe of Italy before he begun a ſilly ſtory, *voltate gueſto canto e nol leggete*, "*paſs over* "*this chapter and read it not*," as I am ſure, that they will not find in it any thing worth their peruſal with regard to Italian muſic and Italian muſicians. I really can do nothing elſe in the following paragraphs to the end of this chapter, but run over what the muſical Mr. Sharp has told us in his itinerary letters upon this intereſting ſubject, relative to certain matters of fact which fall within the compaſs of ordinary obſervers, and which, with an attention to truth, Mr. Sharp and I (equally ignorant in the ſcience) are equally capable of remarking.

Mr. Sharp ſays, that *very few Italian gentlemen practiſe the fiddle or any other inſtrument*: that *all the young ladies* (take notice of his emphatical word ALL) *are placed in convents, where they remain until they marry or take the veil, and where muſic is no part of their education*; and that *after*

It may be ſaid with truth, that muſic is ſo bewitching, that whoever makes a point of reaching to any perfection in it, frequently loſes all appetite for nobler acquiſitions; and few are the modern heroes, who, like the king of Pruſſia and the hereditary prince of Brunſwic, poſſeſs the talent of allying the ſoft muſic of Italy with the rough tactics of Germany. The muſic of Italy, though much more ſcientific than that of other European countries, naturally tends to enervate the mind. Hence our Italian performers, though in the lump juſtly preferred to all other performers of Europe for ſuperior powers of delighting, are juſtly derided for greater effeminacy and folly. It is difficult to tell why logic and common ſenſe forſake ſo many of them when muſic is out of the queſtion; and yet this is generally the caſe, though muſic, like all other arts and ſciences, has its foundation in common ſenſe and logic.

If the ancients in ſome commonwealths encouraged, and in ſome caſes enjoined the ſtudy of muſic as ſubſervient even to military excellence, and if it be true, that they had military tunes which on a day of action inflamed combatants to an aſtoniſhing degree, their muſic muſt have been of a taſte much different from that now prevailing in Italy; which, far from having any power of encreaſing courage or any manly virtues, has on the contrary a tendency towards effeminacy and cowardlineſs, whatever little joy or pleaſing tumult it may have the power to awake in the heart of a ſoldier when turned into a military march. The Italians therefore, I mean thoſe of weight and conſideration, as well as the Engliſh, are perhaps not ſo blameable when they contemn thoſe puny gentlemen, who acquire ſuch ſkill in this charming art, as to feel its minuteſt niceties, and be of courſe in rapture with the languiſhing *Cecchina's* of Piccini, and the fainting *Paſtorella's* of Galuppi.

Thus much for what belongs to the firſt part of the harmonious Mr. Sharp's obſervation. With regard to the ſecond, I muſt take the liberty to deny what he has in his letters repeatedly affirmed with great confidence, that *the Italians place all their young ladies in convents, and leave them there until they take the veil or marry.* But as the confutation of this aſſertion, which he has copied out of Miſſon's * travels, would lead me too far from the preſent ſubject, which is the manners and cuſtoms of the Italians with regard to

* Miſſon ſays in one place, that the Italians *ſend their girls to monaſteries in their infancy, and diſpoſe of them in marriage without their knowledge, and even frequently without letting them ſee their future huſbands,* and that *in making marriages they do not trouble themſelves with love, affection, or eſteem, but mind nothing, ſave kindred and riches.* And in another Place, *Not only at Venice, but every where elſe, the girls are ſent to nunneries in their infancy, and they are uſually married or at leaſt betrothed without ſeeing their huſbands.* Many pages of Mr. Sharp's book contain nothing but poor repetitions of the falſe aſſertions of that French preſbyterian.

muſic

muſic and muſicians, I will give it a place in the next chapter; and going on with this, I will only ſay, that Mr. Sharp was right when he aſſerted that *muſic is not much thought of in the education of our young ladies.* And perhaps our nobility and genteel people are far from being wholly in the wrong when they think muſic no very great, and in ſome reſpects a dangerous accompliſhment in women. Our churches and our theatres render muſic very common throughout the country; and what is common cannot be much priſed. Yet we conceive that muſic is not an eligible ſtudy for our young ladies, and this for a very important conſideration. Our climate quickens our ſenſibility in ſuch a manner, that muſic affects us infinitely more than it does other nations. Let your imagination repreſent to you an Italian lady young and beautiful, with all that warmth of conſtitution peculiar to her country, arrayed in the thinneſt ſilk favourable to the ſultry ſeaſon, ſitting at

her harpſichord, her fingers in buſy ſearch of the moſt delicate quavers, and languiſhing to a *Mi ſento morir* of one of our moſt feeling compoſers! Where is the judicious parent who would wiſh to ſee his child in ſo dangerous a ſituation?

I would not however by ſpeaking thus, be thought one of thoſe lovers of ſubtilties and paradoxes, who derive the various characters of nations from the variety of their climates, and who can account even for their predominant virtues or vices by the latitudes where they are placed. Yet I think it an indiſputable fact, that if muſic is more the growth of Italy than of any other part of Europe, it may in ſome degree be attributed to the cleanneſs and warmth of our atmoſphere, which gives to the generality of our women not only ſweeter throats than to thoſe of other countries, but makes them likewiſe feel with more ſenſibility the charms of muſic. It may therefore, for aught I know, be very proper for Engliſh young ladies to be taught

taught muſic; ſince nature, ſo partial to them in all other reſpects, has thought fit to deny to the generality of them the power to learn and execute thoſe tender paſſages and melting cadences which conſtitute the chief excellence of our muſic: and the temperature of their climate too, may guard the Engliſh ladies againſt theſe lively impreſſions, which in them I do not cenſure: but our young ladies would be too much and too often affected by them, if we were ſo imprudent as to put it in their power to give themſelves at pleaſure ſuch a ſeductive amuſement. Muſic may be cultivated in the ſoil of England without any danger, becauſe, like an exotic plant, it will never ſpread ſo as to prove hurtful by its luxuriancy; but we muſt rigidly lop it in Italy, where it grows naturally ſo faſt, as to make us tremble at the balefulneſs of its influence. Are not ſuch of the Engliſh wiſe who keep their miſſes from frequenting the theatre, where too much harmleſs em-

bracing

bracing and too much kiſſing might throw their untutored fancies into ſome diſorder? A ſimilar motive induces the Italians to keep their *ſignorina's* from learning muſic, as they are ſenſible that muſic, though perfectly guiltleſs in itſelf, would certainly diſcompoſe their little hearts, and more eaſily perhaps than the indecencies of a Britiſh ſtage.

There is likewiſe another motive which keeps Italian parents from letting their girls turn muſical. I mean the general character of immorality which our beſt ſingers and maſters of muſic have ſeemed ſtudious to acquire in this age. Mr. Locke, in his treatiſe on education, recommended ſome manual trade for well-born children, by way of furniſhing them with an innocent occupation in their leiſure hours when arrived at the years of manhood. But Mr. Locke's recommendation has been juſtly diſregarded by his countrymen; becauſe manual trades cannot be taught but by baſe mechanics, whoſe low

manners might prove contagious to their tender pupils. The Italian parents would have a greater inconvenience to contend with, ſhould they venture to make their girls great proficients in muſic. They are therefore right when they avoid this danger, or when they ſuffer them only to learn a little from muſical women; which they condeſcend to do in ſeveral of our towns, and eſpecially in Venice, whoſe muſical hoſpitals furniſh them with female teachers, who know ſo much of playing and ſinging as to be able to give a girl ſome little taſte of both, but cannot eaſily lead her to that excellence in muſic which might prove pernicious to innocence and virtue.

Such is the voluptuous and wicked turn of mind that muſic gives in Italy to the generality of its profeſſors, the ſingers eſpecially, that it has brought them into univerſal diſrepute. So great is the contempt which our ſingers have long merited of us by their corruption, that no excellence

cellence in their way ever entitles them to our eſteem, whatever acts of affability and generoſity their abilities may ſometimes extort from us. There is not one gentleman or lady in a hundred throughout Italy, who ſpeaks to any of them in the third perſon ſingular, which is our civil way of ſpeaking to one another. To the ſingers and the generality of muſicians, we always ſpeak in the ſecond perſon plural, which is our ſtile of condeſcenſion, or in the ſecond perſon ſingular, which is our contemptuous or authoritative ſtile when we talk to our inferiors: and Caffarello himſelf, one of the moſt ſcientific ſingers that ever Italy produced, muſt be contented to be talked to in *Voi* or *Tu* by any body who is one degree above a ſhopkeeper, though Caffarello be actually poſſeſſed of an eſtate of four thouſand Engliſh pounds a year procured by ſinging.

Our ſingers we put on the ſame level with our dancers; and our diſdain for both theſe claſſes of people goes ſo far, that we moſt

moſt commonly give their names ſome diminutive termination, which, according to the genius of our language, makes them ludicrous or mean; or we call them by ſome deriſory nick-name, which is ſtill worſe. Thus for inſtance ſignor Manzoli is generally called *Succianòci*, that is, *Nut-ſucker*, for his playing ſome trick in his ſinging like that of ſucking a walnut; ſignora Gabrieli is ſcarcely known in Italy but by the nick-name of *La Coghetta*, *the little cook*, becauſe ſhe was the daughter of a cook; and ſignora Agujari is termed *La Baſtardella*, *the little baſtard*, becauſe ſhe was a foundling: thus our dancers are ſeldom known but by the appellations of *Gambadiferro*, *Iron-leg*; *Spaccatavole*, *Board-cleaver*; *Schizzetta*, *Flat-noſe*, and the like, which always imply contempt and deriſion.

Thoſe who have read the *Conſcious Lovers*, or ſeen it acted, when they read this account will probably think that in point of manners the Italians have not yet

yet attained so high a degree of politeness as the English or the French have, or at least the author of that play thinks they ought to have. But such the Italians are, and such, since I am about it, I must confess they are.

Mr. Sharp, whose tenderness of bowels is certainly greater than his power of investigation, appears very much concerned at our considering the opera *as a place of rendezvous and visiting*, rather than as a temple sacred to the awful deities of harmony and melody; and he is almost angry with us, because *we do not seem in the least to attend to the music, but laugh and talk through the whole performance without any restraint, so that we cover intirely the voices of the singers by our conversing so loudly together. He was prepossessed of this custom of ours before he left England; but had no idea it was carried to such an extreme. He had been informed that, though the Italians indulged this humour in some degree; yet*

when a favourite ſong was ſinging, or the king was preſent, (I ſuppoſe he means the king of the Italians) *they obſerved a due ſilence: but he muſt deny both theſe facts from what he has ſeen.*

What a deal of wiſdom laviſhed on ſo trifling a ſubject as that of an Italian opera! But ſee how ſhamefully poor ſtrangers are impoſed upon by theſe naughty writers of travels? Poor Mr. Sharp had been made to believe, that the grave Italians obſerved *due ſilence* at an opera when a favourite ſong was ſung, or a king was preſent; and none of the two facts proves true! Who will ever give credit hereafter to ſuch ſtory-tellers! However, thank our ſtars, a more accurate obſerver of Italian cuſtoms and manners has at laſt viſited that diſtant region; is gone to the opera at Naples; has found to his great aſtoniſhment that two facts of ſo infinite importance have been groſsly miſrepreſented; has denied them of courſe; and has

has thus rendered Old England much wiſer than it was before his great diſcovery.

But though I may heartily join with his countrymen, and give Mr. Sharp my moſt cordial thanks for having imparted his uſeful diſcovery to them; yet I cannot thank him for having told them, that *the Italians learn muſic becauſe trade in Italy is deſpicable, and laborious employments are held in deteſtation.*

Mr. Sharp is certainly miſtaken here; and I muſt in my turn deny both theſe facts. It is rather muſic, than trade or laborious employments, that is deſpicable in Italy, and held in deteſtation. If by labourious employments Mr. Sharp means agriculture and manufactures, (and what elſe can he mean?) I tell him plainly that neither of them is deteſted by the Italians; for, were that the caſe, our farmers, traders, and manufacturers could not certainly be ſo numerous as they are; nor

nor live as they live. They do not indeed in Italy rank with the nobility; nor do they in any country: but they have their natural degree of eſtimation, and theſe employments are neither *deſpiſed* nor *deteſted*. The Engliſh who have travelled in Italy, know very well that many parts of it are as diligently cultivated as the beſt counties in England; and the Engliſh who have not been there, muſt be ſenſible that the Italians do not live, like the Tartars, upon the mere product of their cows, ewes, and mares, ſince it is pretty well known that Italy furniſhes England and other parts of the world with many things which are the fruit of their agriculture. Mr. Sharp, inconſiſtent with himſelf, and forgetful at times of our characteriſtical *hatred to laborious employments*, has hinted ſeveral times in his book at the perfection of our agriculture. He has ſaid, that *it is hardly to be expreſſed how beautiful the environs of Ancona are*; that *the vineyards and arable grounds*

there afford the moſt pleaſing images he has ſeen of peace and plenty; that *there is not an acre of barren ground through all the tract of Lombardy which he has paſſed:* and that *the earth there produces three crops at once, namely wine, ſilk, and corn; the mulberry-trees ſupporting the vines, and the corn growing in the intervals betwixt the trees.*

As to manufactures, no body but Mr. Sharp will ever dream that the Italians *deteſt them.* Many branches of them, nay moſt branches are in a flouriſhing ſtate, and thoſe manufactures are purchaſed from them by all the commercial world. But is it poſſible that Mr. Sharp can have viſited Italy without ſeeing manufacturers and other people *laboriouſly employed?* Has he not ſeen there a ſingle weaver, dier, hatter, ſword-cuttler, paper-maker, coach-maker, ſhoe-maker? And can any body be perſuaded that we have in Italy no maſons, ſmiths, porters, fellers of wood, ſtone-ſawyers, armourers, braſs-founders, and other ſuch hearty fellows, who go through

through the moſt *laborious employments* indiſpenſible in poliſhed ſocieties? The riſing manufactures of Turin, Milan, Mantua, Vicenza, Florence, Perugia, and Ancona, as well as the eſtabliſhed ones ſo well known in other parts, threaten to rival, if not much to reduce the trade of Lyons; and it is well if Great Britain herſelf does not already begin to feel our rivalſhip, in the decreaſe of the ſale of more than one of her moſt eſſential manufactures: and this happens in a country, where, according to Mr. Sharp, they breed up their people to fiddling and ſinging, on account of their *contempt* and *deteſtation* of manufactory!

Trade alſo, Mr. Sharp ſays, is looked upon as *deſpicable* among us: but this is as true and as probable as the reſt. There is at Naples a duke of my name, (to whom by the way I don't claim the honour of being related) and at Rome one marquis Belloni, who are the chief bankers in thoſe towns. In Venice there

are the noble Baglioni, count Peruli, and other people of conſequence, who trade publicly in their own names. At Genoa there are the Cambiaſi's, the Celeſia's, and ſome of the very chief ſenators and noblemen, who are likewiſe publicly concerned in trade. At Ancona there is marquis Trionfi, already named, who is at the very head of the merchants there. I could eaſily go on to the end of the chapter detailing the names of Italians, who make not the leaſt ſcruple to ally trade to nobility: but the mentioning of theſe few will prove ſufficient to demoliſh the aſſertion of our acute obſerver, as the names of theſe few are commonly known on the Royal Exchange; and their affairs are tranſacted very often there as well as thoſe of numberleſs other of our merchants, who far from being held as deſpicable people by their countrymen, are, on the contrary looked upon in a very honourable light.

If I were to adviſe a gentleman who undertakes to inſtruct others, firſt to be informed himſelf, I would recommend it to Mr. Sharp to look a little into the ſtate of trade, manufactures, and Italy, before he ventures to ſay, that trade and manufactures are deſpiſed and deteſted amongſt us.

But let me not loſe ſight of Mr. Sharp's account of our opera's and opera-matters. In his uſual affecting ſtrain he ſays, that *a ſtranger who has a little compaſſion in his breaſt, feels for the poor ſingers, who are treated with ſo much indifference and contempt by the Italians, as not to be liſtened to when they ſing on the ſtage.*

The muſicians are indeed very unlucky to meet nothing but contempt in a profeſſion, in which they take refuge, and for which they quit trade and manufactures merely to avoid ſuch treatment! But what an abominable people are the gentry of Italy! Oh the barbarians who

do not feel for their poor fingers! How can they be ſo utterly deprived of that virtue, which is the characteriſtic of true Chriſtians, of the Engliſh in general, and of Mr. Sharp in particular! And how can the Italian fingers *ſubmit to ſo groſs an affront, and to ſo dreadful a mortification*, as Mr. Sharp expreſſes it in his uſual pathos and true ſublime!

But, Sir, you muſt excuſe me for my laughing at theſe diſmal accounts of our cuſtoms and manners. If ſinging was bread and cheeſe to the Italians, and if they trampled madly upon their bread and cheeſe, you could not expreſs their madneſs in more energetic terms. But ſinging is only a diverſion, and attended to with no more ſerioufneſs than a diverſion deſerves. I have told you already, that we have ſo great a plenty of muſic in Italy as to have very good reaſon to hold it cheap; and every ſenſible Engliſhman muſt wonder at your wonderful wonder on ſuch trifling occaſions, and at your ſolemnity

of

of ſcolding, as if we were committing murder when we are talkative in the pit, or form ourſelves into card-parties in our boxes. Our ſingers then, though we be unwilling to liſten, would be very impertinent, if they did not ſing their beſt, ſince they are very well paid for ſo doing; and Caffarello was ſoon taught better manners when he took it into his head not to do his duty upon the ſtage of Turin on pretence that the audience was not attentive to his ſinging. He was taken to jail in his Macedonian accoutrements for ſeveral nights as ſoon as the opera was over; and brought from the jail to the ſtage every evening, until by repeated efforts he deſerved univerſal acclamation.

Mr. Sharp wonders alſo, that *it is not the faſhion in Italy, as it is in England, to take a ſmall wax-light to the opera, in order to read the book.* A very acute remark as uſual; to which I have nothing to ſay,

but that the Italians are not ſo good-natured as the Engliſh, who have patience enough to run carefully over a ſtupid piece of nonſenſe while a ſilly eunuch is mincing a vowel into a thouſand inviſible particles. When we are at the opera, we conſider thoſe fellows in the lump as one of the many things that induced us to be there; and we pay the ſame attention to their ſinging which we pay to other parts of that diverſion. We fix our eyes, for inſtance, a moment or two on the ſcenes and the dreſſes, when they happen to be new and ſuperlatively well imagined: and our ſingers would be very ridiculous indeed, if to their cuſtomary impudence they added that of pretending to much more regard than what we pay to the pencil of an ingenious ſcene-painter, or even to the elegance of a fanciful taylor. Our gentlemen then, as well as thoſe of London, have the ladies to look at; and the ladies, we will ſuppoſe, have that of looking

looking at the gentlemen, or at one another's cloaths and head-dreſſes; and having their hands thus full, beſides the affair ſtill more important of laughing and talking, what need have they to look in the book? And then, if the opera is not one of thoſe compoſed by Metaſtaſio, we know certainly beforehand, that it is ſome compoſition full as witty as the *Lavinia's* and *Catarattaco's* of our famed Bottarelli; or if the opera is Metaſtaſio's, we know likewiſe for certain beforehand, that it is as perfectly butchered by the opera-poet, as thoſe that are exhibited in the Hay-market. Let any of the two be the caſe, would we not be ſupremely ridiculous to pore for ſome hours over an opera-book with a ſmall wax-light in our hands?

But it is high time to have done with this tedious ſubject of opera's. Yet, before I end my chapter, I muſt let my reader know, that muſic conſtitutes a part of our diverſions beſides the opera's. It

is already known that we have a good deal of it, and of the moſt excellent, in our churches, eſpecially on holidays. We have likewiſe many kinds of clubs in almoſt all our towns of any note, where ſuch gentlemen as apply any way to muſic, (for ſuch there are, whatever Mr. Sharp may ſay to the contrary) aſſemble on fixed days to play together till they are weary, and always without the intervention of the bottle, which is rarely a helper to our pleaſures. To theſe kinds of clubs, which we call *Accademia's*, ladies are invited and admitted gratis, and as ſimple hearers, even when they can perform. It would be a great piece of incivility if any men there was to beg of them to ſing or play: but if they condeſcend to do it of their own motion, the whole company gives them applauſe and thanks. At Venice when a *procuratore*, *cancellier*, or other great officer of ſtate is made, his friends or dependants by way of compliment

ment collect a numerous mercenary band; get a room over the ſtreet through which his excellency makes his entrance into St. Mark's palace; and there a grand concert is played. At Rome on the creation of a pope or a cardinal, and in other parts of Italy on occaſion of births or marriages of princes, ſome great nobleman or ſome ambaſſador has a *cantata* made on purpoſe; that is, a kind of triumphal or epithalamic ſong, which is ſung in ſome large hall to the nobility invited by the owner of the feaſt, and not ſeldom to a great concourſe of people, who go there as genteely maſked as they can. Such cantata's are generally followed by a grand ball and a moſt magnificent diſtribution to every body preſent of ice-meats and other kinds of refreſhments: and as it is cuſtomary for the low people to put in their pockets the cups, ſaucers, ſpoons, and other ſuch things, after having eaten or drank their *rinfreſco's*, it is eaſy to imagine

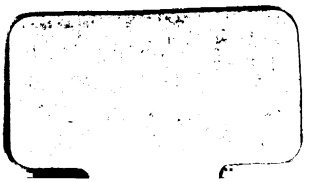
imagine that ſuch treats prove very expenſive, and amount to ſeveral thouſand ſequeens*.

But the Italians love muſic no where ſo well as in their ſtreets at night. In ſummer eſpecially, they go about with their fiddles and guitars, their flutes and hautboys, playing, and ſinging, and ſtopping under the windows of fine girls and handſome ladies, who are always much pleaſed with ſuch marks of diſtinction from their friends and lovers, and often return the civility by ſending lemonades, ſweetmeats, and noſegays to the performers. At Venice it is a thing really delightful to rove on a ſummer night about the Laguna in a gondola, and hear from ſeveral boats ſeveral bands of muſicians playing and ſinging, the moon ſhining bright, the winds huſhed, and the water as ſmooth as a glaſs. Theſe *ſerenata's*, as we call them, are ſeldom or never diſ-

* A ſequeen is about ten ſhillings.

turbed

turbed by riots, as would probably be the caſe in England, were ſuch entertainments cuſtomary: and this is perhaps the only muſic which the Italians enjoy in ſilence, as if unwilling to ſpoil the calm and ſtillneſs of the night. And thus do I end this chapter, which I fear has proved too long, conſidering the frivolouſneſs of its argument.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

JAN 16 1947